

# HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

VOLUME XI

APRIL, 1918

NUMBER 2

---

## THE MONOLOGUE OF BROWNING

GEORGE HERBERT PALMER

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Hardly another poet in the whole course of English literature has met with such violent and continuous partisanship as Robert Browning. When Wordsworth put forth his epoch-making little volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, he too met derision, but it lasted only twenty years. By the time he reached middle age his position as a master was assured, and his limitations were well understood. Over Browning disputation has continued longer. Throughout his life and during the quarter-century since his death he has had ardent assailants and just as ardent defenders. Persons of standing declare the man a barbarian, who broke into the fair fields of verse with poetry cacophonous in sound, obscure in expression, and shocking in subject. On the other hand, there are those who regard Browning as half divine. He is a prophet, they say, and has so disclosed to them the significance of their personal lives that they cannot hear any criticism of him without a shiver. Sometimes Browning is set up in laudatory antagonism to Tennyson, or Tennyson in antagonism to Browning; and certainly these poets do differ fundamentally. But are their differences disparaging or supplemental? I believe I shall find the safest approach to my heated subject if,

without praise or blame, I coolly note some of the points of contrast between the two.

Tennyson is English for many generations; Browning is of compound nationality. Tennyson lived in England and found his subjects there; Browning lived long on the continent and gathered his subjects from everywhere except England. Tennyson is a university man; Browning had a miscellaneous education. Tennyson is acquainted with physical science; Browning only with literature, many literatures. Tennyson's life is rooted in institutions; Browning cares little for them. Tennyson has a strong interest in the social and religious questions of his age; Browning only in the problem of self-development. Through many generations Tennyson was connected with the Established Church; Browning, his parents, and his wife were Congregationalists. Tennyson was an idealistic recluse; Browning a realistic man of the world. Tennyson's figures are generalized; Browning's particularized. Tennyson's favorite time is that of the mediæval myth; Browning's the later Renaissance. Tennyson aims at beauty, through approved and standard language; Browning at force and expressiveness. Tennyson chooses for subjects graceful and harmonious incidents; Browning unusual and startling ones. Tennyson is the conscious artist, ever correcting; Browning the spontaneous improvisatore. Tennyson has an exceptional mastery of poetic technique; Browning is rugged and bizarre. Tennyson has many of the traits of a refined and timid woman; Browning is all manliness and optimism. Tennyson was a dramatist at the end of his life; Browning at the beginning.

What amazing contrasts are here! Yet the two poets never conceived of themselves as rivals. On the contrary, Tennyson inscribed his *Tiresias* thus: "To my good friend, Robert Browning, whose genius and geniality will best appreciate what may be best, and make most



allowance for what is worst, this volume is affectionately dedicated." And Browning had earlier written in his volume of *Selections* these careful words: "Dedicated to Alfred Tennyson. In poetry—illustrious and consummate. In friendship—noble and sincere." It will not then become us to take sides in the fictitious antagonism. Rather, in considering Browning, we must lay aside partisanship and endeavor—however contentious be the ground—to inquire dispassionately what Browning stands for. What is his type?

To determine this, let us for a moment turn back to the Classicists, as their work culminated in Pope, and recall how largely with them poetry was removed from ordinary life, from the life at least of the individual. It was a social affair. Its figures were cultivated men and women who appear conversing with their kind. Literature accordingly stood, as it were, somewhat apart from ordinary existence, having its own laws, its own diction. It was not called on to mirror my life or your life, or to use the language of our homes. Of course as time went on, and especially as the followers of Pope cheapened his refined standards, there came a revolt, and individual life was declared to be the important thing. When then Wordsworth, as the leader of this Romantic Movement, sets out to depict the actualities of experience, we should expect him to bring before us men and women as we find them on the street. But this he did not do. While turning away from artificial human nature and studying with penetrating veracity genuine persons, he was chiefly interested in those central emotions which build up homes and states, and rather oblivious to such momentary changes as, going on in all of us, differentiate man from man. Precisely to these Tennyson devotes himself and thus gives to naturalistic verse a psychological depth it had not previously known. But he studies moods rather than persons. The single phases of humanity so

vividly set forth by him do not properly belong to John, Thomas, or Susan, but are universal, though temporary, aspects of any human being. The companions of Ulysses whom we meet in Lotus Land cannot be distinguished from one another. Edward Gray's melancholy over Ellen Adair might as well have been that of Peter Robinson for Mary Brown. How characterless is Maud! "Dead perfection, no more." The delightful Grandmother is so grandmotherly as to belong to no special race, time, or village. All these people are abstractions, representative of single traits, with as little blood in them as any figure of Ben Jonson's or Dickens'. Novelists—Richardson, Fielding, Scott, Miss Austen—had long before made their readers acquainted with total human beings. But none such had yet appeared in poetry, unless in the pages of that half poet, half novelist, Crabbe. Neither Byron, Shelley, nor Keats knows anything of living men and women.

There is then something still to be done if poetry will listen to Wordsworth's call and, abandoning conventions, deal with the realities of common life. Whoever can make us feel the complex and unstable unity of an individual person will introduce a new and highly important type into English poetry. This is the aim of Browning, and from it spring most of his peculiarities. Announcement of that aim is made in the preface to *Sordello*, where he writes: "My stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul. Little else is worth study." Accordingly Browning pays the least possible attention to outward nature. Only two or three of his poems set forth nature at all. There is *De Gustibus*, *The Englishman in Italy*, and *Home Thoughts from Abroad*. Is there another in which nature is the theme, or even where, as in Tennyson, nature forms a sympathetic background for human action? Browning's figures need no background. They stand firmly on their own feet. The



disposition then to turn to individual life and, without apology or attempt to justify the choice of subject by any lesson it might teach; simply to say, "The precious thing in all the world is the personal being. Whatever he does and says deserves attention"—this democratic individualism is what gives distinction to Browning, though it was also the special gospel of his age. Carlyle, Emerson, Arnold, John Stuart Mill, George Eliot, were all proclaiming it. Browning gives it appropriate form in poetry. The circumstances of his life shaped him admirably for the work.

That life is six years shorter than Tennyson's, beginning three years later and ending three years earlier; that is, it extends from 1812 to 1889. It divides itself into four periods, in close parallelism to those of Tennyson. Like his too they are entirely literary periods, not periods formed by outward events. The first we may call his Juvenile period, from his birth to 1828, a momentous date in Browning's life; for he then fell in with the poems of Shelley. The second is his period of Experiment, from 1828 to 1840 or 1842, the publication of the *Bells and Pomegranates*. Then comes his period of Mastery, when at last he has found himself, knows exactly what his work in the world is to be, and sets eagerly about it. This period runs from the *Bells and Pomegranates* to *The Ring and the Book* in 1870—or if we will be exact, 1869. The last is his period of Decline and Sophistry, from 1870 to 1889. Of this last I shall say little, except that, while it contains many bits of vigorous verse, his fame would, in my judgment, be more secure if all written after *The Ring and the Book* could be struck out. It is the early periods which require attention. If we would rightly measure Browning's subsequent stature, we must carefully observe his growth.

He was a city boy, born at Camberwell, a suburb of London. In cities he always made his home, using the

country merely for occasional refreshment. Tennyson spent three-quarters of his life in the country; by birth and education he is connected with the ruling class. Browning belongs with the average multitude. Probably his great-grandfather was a waiter at a country inn. His grandfather came to London, entered the service of the Bank of England, and rose rapidly to prominence and considerable wealth. From sharing in this wealth his second wife cut off the children of the first marriage. Browning's father was therefore obliged to care for himself and was unable to obtain a university education. He too became a clerk in the Bank of England, where by diligence he ultimately attained something more than a competence. Having always an eager desire for knowledge, he accumulated a library of six or seven thousand volumes and was able to use books in French, German, and Italian. He was a genial man, fond of drawing and writing stories, and had always a special fancy for whatever was curious and unusual.

I have called Browning a man of composite ancestry, and the fact affected, I believe, the interests of his whole life. His father was an Englishman, his mother a Scotch woman, her father a German merchant of Hamburg. His own father's mother was a Creole from the West Indies. Four nationalities contribute to the formation of this extraordinary man; and it has been surmised, though on slender evidence, that there was also Jewish blood in him. May not these diversities within himself have broadened his sympathies and fitted him more readily than would have been possible had he been thoroughly an Englishman, to comprehend and create the many strange creatures who move across his pages?

His education was similarly miscellaneous. The atmosphere of his home was literary, and his own early literary tastes were strong. But they were entirely unguided by the restraints and standards of a university



or even of continuous schooling. For only a few years at a time was he connected with any school. For less than a year when he was fifteen he attended a Greek class at London University. From that time his father's library was, as it had always really been, his chief source of intellectual nourishment. His constant reading of unusual books made him self-educated and a scholar. Music too he loved, and under the stimulating guidance of his friend, Eliza Flower, he became an adept in musical science. Strange that one of the harshest of modern poets should also be one of the most accomplished in music!

Early in life he showed a taste for poetry and began to write it. His father had been bred in the Classical tradition and looked with disfavor on Romanticism. His library was rich too in the Metaphysical poets. Quarles and Donne early became favorites of young Browning. By the time he was twelve years old he had written a little volume of verse, which he desired to publish under the title of *Incondita*. Thus early appears the taste for fantastic titles. The manuscript was submitted to the critical judgment of a London editor, Rev. W. G. Fox, who advised against its publication, and it was destroyed. But it brought him, besides a wise critic, two deeply valued friends introduced by Mr. Fox, the Misses Flower. Both wrote verse; Sarah, the younger, being the author of the hymn, "Nearer, my God, to thee," and the elder, Eliza, nine years older than Browning, continuing for a long time the object of his romantic devotion. Her he idealized in Pauline. When in boyhood he declared that he wished to devote his life to poetry, his indulgent parents did not gainsay him. He accordingly was prepared for no profession, but in his father's library took all literature for his province.

In 1828 something momentous happened. Browning came upon a copy of Shelley's *Queen Mab*, and persuaded

his mother to give him the rest of Shelley's poems on his next birthday. A new conception of poetry was now opened to him. Byron he had known before. But Shelley disclosed to him the full freedom of Romanticism, its mysticism, its magical music, its penetrating exploration of the human soul. Yet I cannot help thinking that he, like Tennyson, made a false start. Shelley's genius and his own were at the farthest possible remove. Tennyson, after gaining a certain fluency from Byron, withdrew promptly and unharmed to his own proper field. But Browning spent nearly ten years over the impossible task of writing pieces as shapeless as those of Shelley. He always felt gratitude for the one who first awoke him, but after 1840 abandoned him as a guide.

We all know the twofold character of Shelley. He is the inspired lyricist, panting forth a flood of rapture so divine as few poets of plaintive passion have equalled in any land. And then he is the creator of *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, and the rest of that ungainly crew, who at inordinate length preach the theories of Godwin and the dreams of the French Revolution. The lyric Shelley, the seer, lay obviously beyond Browning's reach; but in the expository Shelley, the teacher, there was something which for a time strongly attracted him. In pursuit of it he wrote *Pauline*, *Paracelsus*, *Sordello*—all attempts, as he says in the preface to *Sordello*, to trace through successive stages the development of a soul. The long poem, with this sort of Pilgrim's Progress as its subject, was much in the fashion of the day. Shelley's *Alastor* gave it impetus among the intellectuals, Bailey's *Festus* among the populace. Wordsworth shaped it into a masterpiece in his *Prelude*. No wonder that Browning, who was to become a closer student of character than any previous poet, felt himself drawn to it at the beginning of his career. In 1833, three years after Tennyson's *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* appeared (and it will be remem-



bered that there was three years' difference in the ages of the two poets), Browning put forth *Pauline*, following her in 1835 with *Paracelsus*, and in 1840 with *Sordello*. In each of these, by different methods, he attempted to trace the formation of a particular individual throughout the entire extent of his life; to see him aspiring, failing, groping, and ever moving from a small understanding of himself and the world to a large. All these books were published at the expense of members of Browning's family, and all failed. Few copies were sold and little notice of them was taken. Here and there were readers intrepid enough to find their way through the literary jungle to merit. But they were naturally few.

Already, however, in 1837 the actor Macready thought he could detect underneath the intricacies of Browning's early books a talent for portraying character. He asked Browning for a play, and *Strafford* was produced five nights at Covent Garden. It was expected to run three weeks. Browning and his hardened eulogists have always blamed the actors for its withdrawal; but a single reading should convince any one that the play itself made failure inevitable. Yet the attempt at play-writing formed an important second step in Browning's advance toward individual portraiture.

The method first tried had been a serial one, stage succeeding stage in the development of a person. It had proved too theoretic, vague, and dilatory for a genius so forcibly concrete as Browning. A drama removes these objectionable features. A rounded individual is then at once thrown open to inspection, as he sets forth his own point of view in contrast with that of opposing characters. This would seem to be the very field in which Browning would shine. For half a dozen years he thought so, and spoke of himself as "Robert Browning, writer of plays." Each year saw a new tragedy fall from his rapid pen. Occasionally, as in the first two acts of

*Pippa Passes*, something vivid and memorable was produced. But in general, Browning's plays lack distinction. Long speeches occur where swift action is needed. The plot is obviously managed, instead of unfolding itself, and the characters, though often strange, are unimpressive. Gradually it became plain, even to Browning himself, that he had not yet found his proper field.

In 1841 a new project was formed. Since managers refused his plays and the public his books, Browning's father arranged with Moxon to issue a play from time to time in pamphlet form. For the series Browning chose the repellent name of *Bells and Pomegranates*. Few copies selling, even at the tempting price of sixpence, Moxon suggested that some poems of a briefer sort be added; and accordingly in the third number, in 1842, appeared the beginning of that wonderful series of *Dramatic Lyrics* in which Browning at last found his sure mode of expression.

The form of these pieces is the monologue, the drama of a single speaker. So peculiarly suited to Browning is the scheme that we are apt to think it his invention. But it has been used in all periods of English poetry. Drayton's *Heroical Epistles* are monologues; so are Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard* and Cowper's *Alexander Selkirk*. Tennyson in *St. Simeon Stylites* employed it as early, and afterwards almost as frequently, as Browning himself; in *Maud* giving it greater variety than does Browning in *James Lee's Wife*. No, in the monologue Browning merely accepted a not uncommon form as an instrument for painting individual character more accurately than was possible in the sequent study of a single soul or the conversation of a contrasted group. As soon as Browning had created the Dramatic Lyric he abandoned play-writing altogether. The new method preserved all that was valuable both in it and its lumbering predecessor, attained the full individualism at which



Romanticism had long unsuccessfully aimed, introduced a new type into English poetry, and brought before its readers such a company of living men and women as it had not seen since Chaucer died.

For Browning added elements to the monologue which greatly increased its power and adapted it to his special work. They do not appear in all his pieces in equal degree. But about in proportion to their presence and prominence is the importance of the poem. As they become blurred, the monologue loses something of its quality. They are these: (1) His monologue is dramatic, addressed to a listener. (2) It is psychological, disclosing the speaker rather than what is spoken of. (3) It is comprehensive and sums up a complex and habitual character. I will explain briefly each of these points.

Browning's monologue at its best—as in *Andrea del Sarto*, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *Clive*, *The Laboratory*, *In a Year*—is no mere soliloquy, a piece of introspective analysis, as most preceding monologues had been. His are veritable dramas, involving several persons, to only one of whom do we attend. The mind of him who speaks is everywhere in contact with another mind, which it seeks to bring over to its own point of view. It is as if we stood by a telephone and heard its user speak to a distant friend, and were left to guess at the situation by the fragmentary utterances of only one side. But it is dialogue still. An unseen interlocutor is there, and what we hear has constant reference to his thought. Undoubtedly there are shadings between such completed monologues and soliloquy. In *The Ring and the Book* most of the speakers seek to impress their own view of the case on definite persons. The Pope does not. He is alone and soliloquizes. But his is not like *Abt Vogler's* or *Johannes Agricola's*, mere soliloquy; for he addresses a plea for mercy or condemnation to God, the Church, public opinion, and argues it out with each.

The dramatic advantage of such monologue over the ordinary play lies in the concentration of interest. Where all else is subordinated to a single individual, we more readily identify ourselves with him than if he were but one of a group.

But if the monologue, unlike the soliloquy, has an objective reference to a supposed auditor and outward situation, our interest is not fixed on these. On the contrary, they are but a means for giving to the speaker an importance greater even than he has in the soliloquy, and far greater than in the narrative. They might be compared to a sounding-board, reflecting back in fuller tone the character of the speaker. In judging another, we judge ourselves. Our estimate of a person or event may be incorrect; but if given at an unguarded moment, it is stamped with the impress of him who makes it. This is the profound truth on which Browning's monologue is based. In order to present a person, it is unnecessary to trace successive "incidents in the development of a soul," to watch the man's behavior in society, or to hear him soliloquize. There is a shorter and more illuminating way. A minute of a life as truly contains the character as fifty years. If we would know what a man is, we have only to throw a flash-light on him at a crisis-moment and watch his reaction. That is Browning's new method. The serial scaffolding is torn down, the group dismissed, the narrative suppressed. Only the dramatic essence remains—a mind reacting on a defined person and situation. The first ten years of Browning's authorship had been spent on the soliloquy, the narrative, and the play; and the first two of these were still to ravage his last twenty years. Even during his years of Mastery the narrative appears as late as 1845 in the beautiful *Italian in England*, the soliloquy in *Christmas Eve* of 1850, and something like a play in *In a Balcony* of 1853. But these forms are now sub-



ordinate. A shorter and more luminous method has been found.

It should be noticed too that while Browning's flash-light is usually a brief affair, it illuminates not a single mood but a total complex individual. For this it is peculiarly fitted. Tennyson shows us in *Sir Galahad* only chivalric purity; but Browning's Duke, displaying the picture of his last Duchess, is himself a full-length portrait. His dignity, courtesy, cruelty, interest in sculpture, in painting, unite, unconsciously and without exaggeration, to show this cross-section of a Renaissance aristocrat. As Browning's aim too is not moral instruction but the dispassionate study of individual character, good and evil qualities are allowed to intertwine in the same perplexing fashion as in actual life.

Here then is a new and majestic type, and one of deep consequence for the depicting of humanity in English poetry. Of course Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning all alike deal with human nature. But Wordsworth deals with its fundamentals, Tennyson with its single moods, and only after long writing does individual man come to his own. With Browning the creation of character is its own abundant justification. When a poet can truly say, "Here they are, my fifty men and women," we have no right to ask if they are such as will be socially valuable.

Nor must we be disturbed at certain unpleasing characteristics sure to mark the work of such a poet. Laying stress on the individual factor in life rather than the social, he will be disposed to care little for beauty, good taste, and conventional refinement, and will pick out subjects that are peculiar, erratic, even abnormal. In boyhood Browning cared for strange pets, bizarre stories, forced rhymes. They prepared him for his realistic work. His poems introduce us to people who are half insane—*Porphyria's Lover*, *Giraldus*, *Childe Roland*—or to those

morally repulsive, like Ffine, Sludge, and Guido Franceschini. Yet when abnormal persons are shown to be living creatures, our hearts beat in sympathetic response. Nothing human is without interest. But it must be remembered that if these strange beings are to be transferred imaginatively to printed pages, they will use their own language. It would be bad art to offer them the standard language, such as is current among ladies and gentlemen. Not being ladies and gentlemen, they should use the language which accords with their special character. It will not do to be shocked at a diction unheard in poetry before.

On similar grounds some excuse may be found for Browning's notorious obscurities. They spring from fecundity, not feebleness. He can say anything he pleases, and say it with utmost precision. But what pleases him does not always please us. He is a man richly endowed, venturing into strange regions. His crowding thoughts often obtrude on one another, and if we fail to catch his point of view, we do not readily comprehend him. From usual modes of speech, as from usual characters, he is constitutionally averse. In a letter in my possession sent him from New Zealand, in 1846, by his friend Alfred Domett—the "Waring" of his poem—Domett writes: "As regards your books, I have one first and last request to make or advice to give you. Do for Heaven's sake try to be commonplace. Strain as much for it as weaker poets do against it. And always write for fools. Think of them as your audience, instead of the Sidneys and Marvells and Landors. Ask some one—the dullest, ploddingest, acquaintance you have—how he or she (if you can find a woman quite stupid enough) would have expressed your thought, and take his or her arrangement. Will you do this? I fear not. Yet I know that herein lies your truest course." Browning preserved the letter but rejected the advice. As an



improvisatore of singular genius, he could learn nothing from criticism. The more the public grumbled, the more firmly he set his teeth and walked his devious way. We may regret that he could not, like Tennyson, draw aid from his enemies. But genius has its limitations and compulsions. He was not writing for others, but merely to create children of his brain, writing for himself. All we can ask of such a man is that he accept good-naturedly the isolation involved in his work. Browning did not do so, but from time to time bitterly complained that he was not understood. So individual a writer, attempting an altogether new line, should have been as indifferent to public opinion as was Wordsworth. Browning was resentful of disparagement and strangely tolerant of organized adulation. Some social feeling is apt to linger about the extremest individualist.

Yet while the creation of individual characters was the special function of Browning, he was not always able to carry it out dispassionately. He too was an individual, possessed of beliefs, moral approvals, and a temperament of his own. Through these he views the characters he constructs, and by these they are liable to be distorted. A great poet is distinguished from a poetic writer by the very fact that he has acquired a fixed point of view from which to survey all that comes before him. Nobody can be impressive without a creed, gospel, or set of habitual ideas with which he confronts the world. What we may call the creed of Browning is, if I rightly understand it, something like this:

To each man there is intrusted a unique character, unlike all others, but incomplete, and with higher and lower possibilities. Which of these possibilities shall prevail is determined by the man's own action at crisis-moments, which in themselves are often small. Sin, for Browning, is therefore, for the most part, injury to one's self rather than to society; and conventional sins are

little regarded. The world is for each of us a place of moral training and discipline, and has meaning only as material out of which a person may be formed. A world so constituted implies a God, whose existence cannot be independently proved but is involved in the whole framework of things. His presence is testified to by the Bible and by the consciousness of all men at their highest. This God is a being of power and knowledge, though still like ourselves. In ourselves we see that power and knowledge are merely instrumental to love, which is the highest manifestation of personality. Were God without love, we should be his superiors. Browning does not then conceive God as manifested in law, that is, in scientific fashion; but as the life-principle of love, in an individualistic way. Matter is but a lower form of spirit, and what look like circumstances are, in reality, only a reflex of the person. God lovingly imparts to us the germs of his own life. Consequently there is an immortality of activity open to each of us, whether in ever fresh existence or in a single continuous existence. But recognition will always be possible. Anything but optimism is stupid and cowardly.

Such in briefest outline is Browning's creed, the body of ideas through which he interprets the world. A noble creed it is, with which in substance I heartily agree. Yet it is not the primary business of an artist to inculcate doctrine. Doctrine, of course, will underlie his work, just as it underlies all life. Our world is bound together by laws or principles, which no true representation of it can disregard. But they are mixed with things, and to detach them for separate statement destroys that concrete unity which it is the artist's office to discover and present. We may say, if we like, that Hamlet teaches the dangers of delay, and Antony those of impulse. But the plays were not constructed for that purpose. Shakespeare sought merely to present an interesting section of



human life, and did it with such truth that we can draw from it a moral lesson, as we can from nature itself. The artist is primarily a seer, not a teacher. His characters and situations are no mere means to moral instruction as ends. They are themselves their own end.

Now notwithstanding Browning's extraordinary power of artistic creation, he will not always submit to its laws, but often puts into a poem matter which the subject does not demand. He has some theory to maintain, some lesson to impart, some clever thought has struck him, and he steps forward to offer his own ideas instead of leaving us to view the mind of an imagined character. No doubt it was difficult to be a dispassionate expositor. His beliefs were clear and urgent, and it is much more natural for the Englishman and American to turn to moralizing than to art. The art-sense is feeble among readers today. Then too strong influences were unhappily brought to bear, impelling Browning away from his unique office of character-creator to be the deliverer of a moral "message." Read the following passage from one of the letters of Miss Barrett to him just after he had discovered his new method and had begun to apply it in constructive work. On May 26, 1846, immediately preceding their marriage, she writes:

"But you—you have the superabundant mental life and individuality which admits of shifting a personality and speaking the truth still. *That* is the highest faculty, the strongest and rarest which exercises itself in art—we are all agreed there is none so great faculty as the dramatic. Several times you have hinted to me that I made you careless for the drama, and it has puzzled me to fancy how it could be, when I understand myself so clearly both the difficulty and the glory of dramatic art. Yet I am conscious of wishing you to take the other crown besides, and after having made your own creatures speak in clear human voices, to speak yourself

out of that personality which God made, and with the voice which He tuned into such power and sweetness of speech. I do not think that, with all that music in you, only your own personality should be dumb, nor that having thought so much and deeply on life and its ends, you should not teach what you have learnt in the direct and most impressive way, the mask thrown off, however moist with the breath. And it is not, I believe, by the dramatic medium that poets teach most impressively. I have seemed to observe that! It is too difficult for the common reader to analyze and to discern between the vivid and the earnest. Also he is apt to understand better always when he sees the lips move. Now here is yourself with your wonderful faculty!—it is wondered at and recognized on all sides where there are eyes to see—it is called wonderful and admirable! Yet with an inferior power you might have taken yourself closer to the hearts and lives of men, and made yourself dearer, though being less great. Therefore I do want you to do this with your surpassing power—it will be so easy to you to speak, and so noble when spoken.

“Not that I usen’t to fancy I could see you and know you, in a reflex image, in your creations! I used, you remember. How these broken lights and forms look strange and unlike now to me when I stand by the complete idea! Yes, *now* I feel that no one can know you worthily by these poems. Only—I guessed a little. *Now* let us have your own voice speaking of yourself—if the voice may not hurt the speaker—which is my fear.”

How exquisitely said, and how poisonous! Not only too was this poison given by her who was dearest, it came from the outside world as well. That Dr. Furnival who founded the Browning Societies writes thus, in eulogy of Browning’s Essay on Shelley:

“The interest in this piece lay in the fact that Browning’s utterances here are his, and not those of any one of



the so many imaginary persons behind whom he insists on so often hiding himself, and whose necks I for one should continually like to wring, whose bodies I would fain kick out of the way, in order to get face to face with the poet himself, and hear his own voice speaking his own thoughts, man to man and soul to soul. Straight speaking, straight hitting suit me best."

Yes, they always suit the prosaic Englishman best. In his mind the teacher is regularly set above the artist. In Browning's poetry both are present. It is strange that when in a neighboring art Browning had called attention to this distinction between naturalistic portraiture and endeavor after edification, and given strong preference to the former, he should so frequently in his own art have taken the lower course. In his poem of *Fra Lippo Lippi* we see the painter covering the walls of his cloister with pictures of unmistakable men and women. Then we hear the Prior's reproach:

"How? What's here?  
Quite from the mark of painting! Bless us all!  
Faces, arms, legs, and bodies, like the true  
As much as pea and pea! It's devil's game.  
Your business is not to catch men with show,  
With honor to the perishable clay,  
But lift them over it, ignore it all."

To which *Fra Lippo* replies:

"Say there's beauty with no soul at all  
(I never saw it, put the case the same).  
If you get simple beauty and naught else,  
You get about the best thing God invents."

What a pity that Browning, abandoning naturalistic representation, for which he had as fine a genius as the Florentine monk, should so frequently have given way to sententious moralizings!

We hardly exaggerate when we say that there are two Brownings: one, the seer, who firmly and disinterestedly pursues his constructive art and, having observed all the subtleties of a character, is satisfied if he can present us a living being who announces no "lesson"; and then there is the teacher, who cannot escape from himself and is busy with inculcating his own special creed. It is no wonder that as time went on, this facile teacher, emancipated from the restraint of character-building, took on more and more the voice of Browning, became ever more wordy, and recorded more clumsily in rugged rhythms whatever random reflections came into his head. Browning had always loved argument and been amused to see what might be said in behalf of a bad cause. This tendency to sophistry grew upon him. We see it at its best in portions of *The Ring and the Book*; at its worst, in *Fifine* and in the *Parleyings*. In Browning's last period little sense of form remains. He often seems to write merely in order to let loose the miscellaneous workings of his mind. Only occasionally is it worth while to read what follows *The Ring and the Book*. After that time the teacher, the sophist, the random talker, are chiefly in evidence; the constructive artist has pretty completely disappeared. It may help some of my readers to trace for themselves the two tendencies in Browning if I group together a few illustrative poems. Much of his work admits no such clear classification. The same poem often contains material of different kinds. But if we select a group to show Browning's power as a constructive artist, it will include such as these: *The Bishop Orders His Tomb*, *Andrea del Sarto*, *Childe Roland*, *The Flight of the Duchess*, *In a Gondola*, *James Lee's Wife*, *The Italian in England*, *Confessions*, *Hervé Riel*, *Life at a Villa*, *The Glove*, *My Last Duchess*. All these poems move us by the imaginative accuracy with which the particular person or situation is presented.

A second group may show how oftentimes, though doctrine is evidently the object of the poem, it still embodies itself in concrete, personal form: *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *The Statue and the Bust*, *Caliban Upon Setebos*, *Saul*, *Cleon*, *The Strange Epistle of Karshish*, *A Grammarian's Funeral*. These are all intended to teach something, but they teach in a dramatic way.

And then we go over into the poems of preaching, directly announcing abstract truths. A little group of the strongest would be these: *Abt Vogler*, *One Word More*, *Old Pictures in Florence*, *Any Wife to any Husband*, *A Death in the Desert*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*. The last may be regarded as Browning's reply to Omar Khayyám; *A Death in the Desert*, his reply to Straus. Such verse makes interesting reading; but the interest is a moral one. It has little to do with imaginative art.

In *The Ring and the Book*, written at the height of his powers and after long experimentation in other fields, Browning has left a complete epitome of his genius. The piece is of colossal proportions, original, terrific, and subtly imaginative beyond any poem of its century. In scope and majesty it takes no presumptuous place beside the glories of our earlier poetry, with *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Faery Queen*, *King Lear*, and *Samson Agonistes*. The Greeks had a way of choosing some hideous legend, "presenting Thebes or Pelops' line," and by its complete presentation in mellifluous language letting pity and fear effect their own purgation. That is what Browning has done. The squalid circumstance of a Roman murder trial more than two centuries gone by, he has made to live again as a thing of beauty and moral significance, acquainting us with the special temper of its distant time and with the baseness and exaltation which belong to humanity at all times. In these twenty thousand lines, put together during nine



years, there is room enough for all Browning's characteristics to find their place without damage to the total structure. Here are his argumentation, his searching psychology, his wide-ranging reading and observation, his interest in whatever is peculiar and out of the way, his profound religious sense, his tenderness, brutality and optimism, his love of mental adventure, occasionally too his mere loquacity. A strange mixture it is, wrought out in what I have called the completed form of his monologue, with appropriate attendant listeners, without soliloquy, narrative, or "message," and finding its sufficient end in a marvellous group of contrasted personalities.

*The Ring and the Book* too announces with startling clearness a fundamental principle of Browning's art to which I have hitherto paid too little attention. It is the principle of "the point of view," and with it his special type of poetry is inherently connected. We know how insistently personal that poetry is. Each man is unique; his nature, nurture, and circumstance differing in some respects from that of his neighbor. Accordingly the powers by which we apprehend truth will vary, and what is true for one of us will not be true for another. There is no standard set of powers by reference to which absolute truth may be known. Reality is always relative. Each of us brings with him a point of view, from which he cannot escape. The doctrine of the point of view accordingly underlies all that Browning writes. Something personal is always added to reality as a formative factor whenever we approach a fact. In *The Ring and the Book* what we call the same story is told by nine different people, and to the last we do not know—nor very much care—what the facts in themselves may really be. We only know how they look from these several points of view. The wise man then will fix his attention rather on the beholder than on the things alleged to be

beheld. "There's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so," Hamlet says. To comprehend a human soul, Browning has told us, is the one thing in the world deserving study. The great service of the poets lies in their teaching us to look at the world from other points of view than our own.

Now *The Ring and the Book* is a veritable school for this sort of instruction, and that its teachings may impress us the more, they are conveyed in triadic form. Three groups, with three contrasted members in each, report to us what they know, and therefore what they are. A ghastly murder occurred at Rome in 1679. Giuseppe Caponsacchi, a priest, ran away from Arezzo to Rome with Pompilia, the girl-wife of Guido Franceschini, a brutal and impoverished noble. Guido pursued the fugitives and subsequently killed Pompilia and her reputed parents, he himself being finally executed. Each of these three chief actors in the affair tells his story, no two alike. But the people of Rome are likewise interested, one part of them taking the wife's side, one the husband's; and besides these, those who, putting away all sentiment, see right on each side and pride themselves on judging all by pure intellect. Each one of this group not involved in the affair lets us learn how his mind has been affected. Then appears the legal group, the advocate of each party with the Pope, the judge of all. At the very last, and after Guido is condemned and is about to pass from his prison to the scaffold, he is allowed to speak once more, and then discloses a side of himself and his story unlike what was heard before.

Here then a story is told ten times without ever failing in interest. This is because by Browning's "new method" the event is transfused through personalities which it illuminates in every part. Where else outside Shakspeare has individual experience been painted on such a scale? The long struggle of Romanticism, moving in

the direction of Browning's new type and new method, culminates in this masterpiece and shows itself capable of prodigious effects. No wonder the coming of something so huge created disturbance in the public mind. People must be either violently repelled or ardently attracted by this unflinching poet of the personal life. We may say that Tennyson and Browning summarize the imaginative life of their century. Browning shows the beginning of that Naturalism which henceforth, for good or ill, was to flood our poetry. Tennyson sings regretfully the shimmering charm, the ideal beauty, the refinement, the wistfulness, which were soon to pass away.



## NEO-REALISM AND RELIGION

R. F. ALFRED HOERNLÉ

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Neo-Realism, we shall all agree, has come to stay. Though the most recent of philosophical movements, it has already made an abiding impression on contemporary thought. Less noisy than Pragmatism, less fashionable than Bergson's Intuitionism, it has yet quietly won over to its side a far larger number of the younger students of philosophy than one would suspect from the comparatively small amount of Neo-Realistic literature. What is even more striking, its criticisms of Idealism have had at least this effect, that many thinkers who are commonly labelled "Idealists" have hastened to dissociate themselves once more in the most explicit terms from that sort of Idealism of which the watchword is Berkeley's *esse est percipi*. The so-called "Objective Idealists" have become noticeably more objective. To have compelled this re-alignment is in itself no small achievement to the credit of Neo-Realism.

By calling itself "new," contemporary Realism rightly emphasizes its profound difference from the older type of Realism which was synonymous with Materialism. When the tide of reaction against the "speculative philosophy" of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel was at its height, and the age demanded a philosophy in harmony with the concepts and theories of physical science, then to be a Realist meant to analyze the universe exclusively in terms of "matter" and "force."<sup>1</sup> The world was regarded as a large-scale mechanism, and minds, together

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff*.

with all they stand for, as an insignificant and ineffective by-product ("epiphenomenon"), comparable to the noises or sparks of a machine. Philosophy was little more than physics exaggerated to metaphysical dimensions. Whatever facts in the universe cannot be dealt with by the methods and concepts of physics were depreciated, if not ignored. The modern Neo-Realist knows better than that. He is no longer preoccupied with the problem of matter and mind. He is no longer concerned to proclaim matter as the ultimate substance or to treat life and mind as accidental and irrelevant. He knows that "science is not all of truth, nor physical nature all of being."<sup>2</sup>

There is another important difference between the old Materialism and the new Realism. The former inevitably inclined towards a pessimistic philosophy of life. It depreciated moral effort on behalf of ideals on the ground of its being doomed to ultimate defeat. It depreciated religion as unscientific superstition and make-believe, intellectually false, morally mischievous. Morality was regarded as nothing but man's misguided attempt to stem the tide of nature, to assert his pigmy self against a hostile world, to impose moral ideals on natural forces wholly indifferent to good and ill. Religion could claim scientific warrant neither for the facts on which it pretended to be based, nor for its optimistic estimate of the significance of human values in the scheme of things. From all these prejudices, too, the Neo-Realists have shown themselves to be emancipated, whenever they have dealt with these problems at all. There is nothing in the position of modern Realism which precludes the attempt to provide an adequate "philosophy of life."

In fact, some of the spokesmen of Neo-Realism appear to claim that it is the only type of philosophy which can successfully make this attempt. It is put forward

<sup>2</sup> R. B. Perry, *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, p. 108.

as the only genuine reconciler of science and religion, the theoretical and the practical interests of men. To achieve such a reconciliation has, not without justice, been regarded as one of the most persistent problems of philosophy. But in all previous solutions, so Professor R. B. Perry declares on behalf of Neo-Realism, philosophy has taken sides. It has either, as "naturalism," capitulated to the aggression of science, or it has, as "romanticism," made itself the champion of religion, even at the price of cherishing illusions. Neo-Realism alone, so we are told, combines disinterested respect for the facts of the world with loyalty to moral ideals. Compared with romantic illusions about the "perfection" of the universe, it is a "philosophy of disillusionment."<sup>3</sup> But the disillusionment is wholesome, for the courageous acceptance of a hard truth is a source of power. Neo-Realism "removes illusions only in order to lay bare the confronting occasion and the available resources of action."<sup>4</sup> The world is not perfect, but perfectible. To perfect it so far as in us lies is morality. To have confidence in its perfectibility and in the efficacy of human endeavour — this "hazard of faith" is religion. Realism is "opposed equally to an idealistic anticipation of the victory of spirit, and to a naturalistic confession of the impotence of spirit. In this sense all bold and forward living is realistic. It involves a sense for things as they are, an ideal of things as they should be, and a determination that, through enlightened action, things shall in time come to be what they should be."<sup>5</sup> Thus Neo-Realism goes with science in its detached, dispassionate respect for facts, regardless of their present conformity to human wishes and ideals. It goes with morality in encouraging the effort to leave our world better than we found it. It goes with religion, at least if religion is adequately summed

<sup>3</sup> R. B. Perry, *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 347.



up in the belief "that what is indifferent will acquire value, and that what is bad will be made good."<sup>6</sup> On this reconciliation of facts with values and ideals, of nature with spirit, Neo-Realism bases its claim to be the only philosophy which allows us to combine science and religion without sacrificing the one to the other.

In these ways, then, Neo-Realism is genuinely new as compared with the old Materialism. Of course, it has affinities, especially in its treatment of religion, with other modern movements. It shares the belief in the perfectibility of the world ("meliorism") with the Pragmatism of James, and the Instrumentalism of Dewey. In eliminating from religion all supernatural elements and identifying it with the hope of, and endeavour for, a more glorious future for mankind, it presents the same marriage of Naturalism and Philanthropy which was characteristic already of Comte and Mill and the "religion of humanity."

At any rate, it cannot be charged against modern Realism that, like Materialism, it is hostile to the claims of man's spiritual life. A Realist may be zealous for righteousness, for his philosophy may encourage activity on behalf of all good causes. Thus it is because Neo-Realism challenges Idealism, not merely on the technical ground of the *esse est percipi* principle, but on the ground of its philosophy of life and of religion, that it is worth while to examine critically what positive alternative Neo-Realism has to offer. How in detail does Neo-Realism interpret religion? To what facts of experience does it appeal in support of this interpretation? How does it define the relations to each other of knowledge and conduct, of theory and practice, of science, morality, religion and philosophy? It will but add doubly and trebly to the importance of our investigation that we shall ultimately find the whole issue to be turning on the problem of evil.

<sup>6</sup> Loc. cit., p. 344.

The course of our argument thus demands, first, a brief survey of the main types and varieties of Neo-Realism with special reference to their bearing on religion (Section I). Thence we shall pass to an examination of the only available Neo-Realistic account of the difference between and relation to one another of the theoretical and practical attitudes in life, our main purpose being to determine, in the light of this distinction, how philosophy ought to interpret morality and religion (Section II). Lastly, we shall find ourselves involved in nothing less momentous than a discussion of the problem of evil (Section III). The melioristic thesis that there is no problem of evil except the practical one of how most efficiently to do away with evil, stands confronted by what seems the gratuitous paradox of the thesis that the world is perfect and that the evil in it is a necessary constituent of its perfection. We shall have to ask ourselves whether meliorism is really as plausible and reasonable, and its rival as unreasonable and self-contradictory, as either appears to be on first inspection. It may be we shall be driven to the conclusion that, for a deeper insight, the paradox of perfection disappears, whereas in meliorism contradictions come to light which make it untenable as an ultimate basis for a philosophy of life.

## I.

To make a Neo-Realist, very little is needed; least of all any excursions into the realm of religion. Whether a thinker is to be classed as a Realist or not, depends solely on his attitude towards two somewhat technical problems. Has he renounced "epistemological dualism"? Has he, once and for all, forsworn the heresy of *esse est percipi*? If so, he is a Realist. The recipe for making Realists may thus be summed up by saying: Be an "epistemological monist" and affirm the "independ-

ence" of reality and knowledge. Both requirements are combined in Professor R. B. Perry's "cardinal principle of Neo-Realism," namely, "the independence of the immanent."<sup>7</sup>

Let us translate these forbidding technicalities into simpler language. A familiar way of expressing the fact that somebody *knows* something is to say, he has an *idea* of it. Similarly, to be ignorant of a subject is to have no ideas of it. Thus knowledge would seem to consist of "ideas" which are "in" the mind of the knower and "of" the object which is known. But what is an idea? A moment's reflection shows that there is nothing to which we can apply the term unless it be what we have in mind, i.e., what we are conscious of, when we perceive and think. As Locke said, an idea is whatever object is before the mind when it thinks. Thus then of the things which I am now perceiving—pen, paper, table, books, etc., I shall have to say that they are ideas in my mind; so also are Neo-Realism, and the theory of knowledge, and all these topics with which my thoughts are occupied as I write these lines. But if so, what of the real world? What of the things themselves, "of" which I have ideas, that is, to which my ideas refer? These clearly must form a separate order of existences, distinct from the ideas in my, or in anybody else's, mind. Strange as this transformation of everybody's world into ideas in his mind referring to real objects "outside" may seem, are we not committed to it by saying that to know is to have ideas of objects? And where else can ideas exist except in minds? Ideas are mental and to be sharply distinguished from real objects which are non-mental. The familiar distinction of body and mind appears to reinforce this analysis of knowledge. And to clinch the matter, we may remind ourselves how commonly we speak of certain sorts of experiences, for example, dreams, as consisting of

<sup>7</sup> Present Philosophical Tendencies, p. 313.



"mere" ideas, that is, ideas to which no objects correspond in the outer world. How can we get on without the distinction between ideas which have objects corresponding to them and ideas which have none?

To argue thus is to be an epistemological dualist, that is, to construe knowledge as a relation between two factors, ideas in, and objects outside, the knowing mind. From the difficulties of this theory, which are too obvious and well-known to require recapitulation, our Neo-Realists have happily shaken themselves free. As sound "epistemological monists," they insist that it is reality itself which we apprehend, not some substitute for, or representative of, it in the shape of an "idea." The object, as Perry puts it, is "immanent" in knowledge. If we still choose to speak of "idea," we ought to mean by the term the *status* of the object in its relation to the knowing mind. Thus, for example, my idea of the table is not a mental fact duplicating and referring to an extra-mental fact; it is the table itself considered as an object of apprehension for me, the table so far and so long as it figures in my field of consciousness. On this point all Neo-Realists appear to be agreed, however they may otherwise differ from each other. The English Realists (S. Alexander, B. Russell, and others), for example, have a very different theory of what a mind is from that of the Harvard group of American Realists (R. B. Perry and E. B. Holt). But when Russell declares that "the faculty of being acquainted with things other than itself is the main characteristic of a mind," and that "acquaintance with objects essentially consists in a relation between the mind and something other than the mind; it is this that constitutes the mind's power of knowing things"<sup>8</sup>—he eliminates ideas as the *tertium quid* standing between a mind and its objects as decisively as S. Alexander does when he analyzes all knowing into a relation of "together-

<sup>8</sup> Problems of Philosophy, pp. 66, 7.

ness" or "compresence" between a mental act of apprehension and a non-mental thing.<sup>9</sup> And in a different way the same "monistic" effect is achieved by Perry and Holt when they treat knowing as a "specific reaction of the central nervous system," and knowledge as the peculiar complex of objects defined by this reaction and by it selected from the objective universe at large.<sup>10</sup> Knowledge, in Holt's striking phrase, is a "cross-section" of the universe. What a given mind knows and what it ignores, what is in that mind and what lies beyond it, depend simply on what the nervous system at a given moment specifically reacts to. Here again there is no room for "ideas."

But this is not all. To eliminate "ideas" from the theory of knowledge is not the same thing as to overthrow the *esse est percipi* principle. For it might still be true that objects cannot exist except in relation to some mind which apprehends them, or some nervous system which reacts to them. Hence it is as essential a part of Neo-Realism to insist upon the "independence" of the object, as it is to insist upon its "immanence." "Things may be, and are, directly experienced without owing either their being or their nature to that circumstance,"<sup>11</sup> declares Perry. To be is one thing, to be experienced is another, says Holt; a thing must be before it can be experienced, hence its being cannot depend on its being experienced.<sup>12</sup> In general, things may pass in and out of the relation to a mind or a nervous system, in virtue of which we say that they are known, without being thereby affected in existence or character. As an English Realist puts it: "We can no more think that in apprehending reality we do not apprehend it as it is apart

<sup>9</sup> The Basis of Realism, Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. VI, *passim*.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. R. B. Perry, *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, Chaps. XII, XIII; E. B. Holt, *Concept of Consciousness*, Chap. IX.

<sup>11</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 315.

<sup>12</sup> *Loc. cit.*, pp. 20 ff.

from our knowledge of it, than we can think that existence depends upon our knowledge of it.”<sup>13</sup> In the light of these quotations, we may claim to have made good the point that the minimum which is required to make a Realist is the affirmation of the “independence” of the object of knowledge and the denial of “representative ideas.”

Has all this any specific bearing on religion? Clearly not. So far we have found Neo-Realism to be narrowly preoccupied with a technical problem in the analysis of what it has taught us to call the “cognitive relation,” and the conclusions reached by it carry no obvious consequences for other fields of investigation. Indeed, the Realism of many Realists seems to begin and end here. Where it does so, it is only by guess-work that we can apply the Neo-Realistic conclusions to the problem of religion. Alexander, for example, would probably not object to saying that in religion we are “compresent” with God; and he does speak of the highest stage of knowledge as “seeing all things in God.” Russell’s theory of acquaintance would, if applied to religion, suggest the question whether, as a matter of fact, we are acquainted with God. And if the answer should be in the affirmative, and if we further remember that acquaintance can never be mistaken, the conclusion should satisfy even the most orthodox. But actually Russell’s discussions of religion do not follow this line at all. In fact, they have no point of contact whatever with his Realism in theory of knowledge. Instead, he is concerned with the status of morality and religion in a world of which he conceives the nature and future fate on the lines of scientific materialism. How on this basis he reaches the conclusion that ultimate extinction awaits the human race and the ideals for the realization of which it struggles, has been discussed in a previous article in these pages.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> A. H. Prichard, *Kant’s Theory of Knowledge*, p. 119.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. an article by the author on *The Religious Aspect of Bertrand Russell’s Philosophy*, in the *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. IX, April, 1916.



But there is, of course, no reason why Neo-Realism should remain thus narrowly *epistemological*, why it should not explore the wider vistas which beckon and tempt every philosopher to adventures in speculation. Hence it is not surprising that some of the most powerful thinkers among the Neo-Realists should have responded to the opportunity, and enlarged their vision to the dimensions of a *metaphysical* theory. Nor again is it surprising that through all their differences there should run a common strain, which we can describe only as a naturalistic or, more specifically, *biological* bias. When the history of philosophical thought at the beginning of the twentieth century comes to be written, the adoption of the biological standpoint will, we may safely predict, be recorded as one of the outstanding characteristics of that thought. Having analyzed the nature and function of mind in knowledge, the Realist is naturally ambitious to paint the picture of the universe and assign to mind its place within the cosmic scene. Alexander puts the point prettily. "The temper of realism," he writes, "is to de-anthropomorphize: to order man and mind to their proper place among the world of finite things; on the one hand to divest physical things of the colouring which they have received from the vanity and arrogance of mind; and on the other to assign them along with minds their due measure of self-existence."<sup>15</sup> In a similar spirit, Perry accuses Idealism of being anthropomorphic and "bio-centric," and consequently unable "to survey the totality of things dispassionately," or "to treat them in a spirit of free and critical enquiry."<sup>16</sup> Pronouncements such as these may seem to accord ill with the statement that Neo-Realism exhibits a biological bias. But it is precisely biology, and more generally the theory of evolution, which have led Neo-Realists to look upon life

<sup>15</sup> *The Basis of Realism*, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 107.

and mind as phenomena in a context of varied other phenomena, as late-comers in the order of evolution, and as confronted on arrival by a determinate and pre-existing environment. It was an easy transition from the independent object of knowledge to the pre-existing environment. It was a fascinating task to seek a place for mind and knowledge within the detailed context and structure of this independent universe, once its independence had been established by epistemological analysis. The biological importance of the central nervous system could then be recognized, and it could be fitted into the pattern in its proper place. Mind and knowledge could be brought under the concept of "behaviour," and treated as identical with, or at least as dependent upon, specific responses of the organism to its environment. It was but a step further to ask how far increase of knowledge might extend man's control over his environment for the satisfaction of his needs, how far nature might prove plastic to the realization of his ideals and be made the tool of his progress. Not all Neo-Realists, however, are interested in this latter question. Indeed, we can at this point discern something like a parting of the ways. Our Realist metaphysicians divide themselves into two groups—the *cosmologists* and the *moralists*, as we may conveniently label them. The former are interested mainly in the diversified spectacle of the universe, which they are content to analyze and describe in detail. The latter are interested above all in "moral causality," in "the operation of moral agents on a pre-existing and independent environment." They seek knowledge which shall "illuminate things in order that action may be invented which shall make them good."<sup>17</sup> Cosmological Realism is represented by Alexander and Holt, though in widely different

<sup>17</sup> These phrases and sentences are quoted from R. B. Perry, *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, Chap. XIV, *A Realistic Philosophy of Life*.

ways, Moral Realism by Perry. Alexander, so far, has given us little more than fragments and sketchy outlines of his universe. Roughly we can discern that he arranges its manifold constituents in an ascending order, which appears to be both an order of temporal evolution and an order of perfection. Each fresh step or level in this order is as real and "self-existent" as the rest, but each also introduces some new quality and is thus more perfect than its predecessors. The "secondary qualities" (colour, sound, etc.) are apparently regarded by Alexander as one such level of perfection; life is another, consciousness in animals and men a third. But man is not the apex of this hierarchy. Above man there are higher levels of more perfect beings, for example, angels, and we may fairly conjecture that the hierarchy somehow leads up to and terminates in God. Each level of existence, as Alexander quaintly says, "enjoys itself" and is "contemplated" by the more perfect beings above it. All this, however, is as yet tentative and shadowy, though no doubt it is being more fully developed in the Gifford Lectures which Alexander is now engaged in delivering at one of the Scotch Universities. It is a strange mingling of echoes from early Christian and Talmudic literature with highly modern psychology and biology. But though this Realism is without any explicit philosophy of religion, it is clearly in temper religious. Though its account of the levels of perfection in their relation to each other provides rather for man's contemplation by God, than for God's contemplation by man, yet it is eager to have us realize "both mind and things to be fragments not merely of something larger than their own salient momentary existences but of an infinite whole." In this sense it invites us to "see all things in God."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> S. Alexander, *The Basis of Realism*, p. 19.



The other of our two cosmological Realists, Holt, is even more silent on religion. His universe is a "neutral mosaic"<sup>19</sup>—"neutral" in the sense that the ultimate elements which analysis can distinguish within it, are neither mental nor material but logical. It too has an ascending order, embodying a kind of logical evolution from simple to complex. It is a universe "graded in a strict and inalienable order of complexities." As his clue for a tentative sketch of this order, Holt has apparently used the system of the sciences. His universe begins with the simple entities of logic and mathematics. Soon after come the secondary qualities; then space (geometry); time, motion, mass (mechanics); matter (physics); the chemical elements; the "larger aggregates, such as clouds, rivers, and seas, mountains, plains, continents, and planets." Thence, passing from the inorganic to the organic, we get plants and animals. To this level of complexity too belongs mind or consciousness. Last in the ontological series comes the level of values, to which correspond the normative sciences, for example, aesthetics and "ethics, including perhaps theology."<sup>20</sup> Clearly, this is a meagre result for the philosophy of religion, unless we are willing to squeeze what comfort we can out of the assurance that the beautiful, the real, the true, and the good, though the least fundamental in the ontological system, are "the very most important for us as human beings."<sup>21</sup>

The only type of Neo-Realism which is directly interested in religion and which attempts to offer a definite "philosophy of life" is the Moral Realism of R. B. Perry. Negatively this shows itself in its unsparing attacks on Idealism (or "Romanticism") as a philosophy of religion which declares the world to be perfect and

<sup>19</sup> The following account is based on certain passages of Chapter VIII, *The Neutral Mosaic*, in E. B. Holt's *Concept of Consciousness*.

<sup>20</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

the good to be fully realized here and now. Positively it shows itself in its plea for the cosmic efficacy of moral efforts, and in its demand for a religion, not of resignation and endurance, but of vigorous aggression upon evil and devoted labour in the cause of human progress. To the examination of this theory of religion we must now turn, considering first its general account of the relation of theory to practice (or "belief"), and secondly its plea for the perfectibility of the universe.

## II.

Belief and theory, so we may summarize Perry's argument,<sup>22</sup> are both forms of knowledge, and "knowledge furnishes the illumination and guidance of all conscious action." In order to do so, knowledge must of course be true. But merely to assert a theory, however true, is not enough. We must also adopt it as a matter of belief. Only then does it become a plan of life. Until theory takes on the form of belief, it "lacks that confidence and steadiness without which no consecutive endeavour is possible." Indeed, the difference between theory and belief cuts much deeper still. It is a moral difference. A different motive is involved, a different human good. In the attitude of theory, we care only about the attainment of truth. In the attitude of belief, we assume truth and look to efficiency of action. So again these attitudes differ in their social effects. "To belief, society owes its cohesiveness and stability; to theory, it owes its chance of betterment." But even this is not the last word. Theory, just because its end is truth, is in principle divorced from action. "The theoretical mood, even when a conclusion is reached, is a state of practical doubt." The conclusion need

<sup>22</sup> All quotations in this section, unless otherwise stated, are taken from R. B. Perry's *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, Chaps. I and II. A first draft of Chapter I appeared in the *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. III (1910).

not be, like a belief, assimilated into the agent's life as, so to speak, its inspiration. Indeed, so Perry seems to hold, this divorce from action is a positive advantage for theory, because it secures "that immunity from direct social responsibility which is most conducive to clear seeing and straight thinking." Ultimately this estimate of the place and function of theory in life rests on the view that essentially "to theorize is to doubt." And even though doubting here seems to mean inquiring, investigating, researching as much as disbelieving, still it means playing among hypothetical alternatives, weighing inconclusive evidences, and therefore refusing to commit oneself. And, again, in the pursuit of truth, the theorist is entitled to concern himself with matters minute and remote from all practical interests. "The theoretical mind is not held to those standards of proportionateness which obtain in life."

Even if we have followed Perry's previous argument without a murmur of dissent, this last statement must surely give us pause. True, Perry speaks of this neglect of proportions as an "incident of theoretical analysis," and mentions scientists, not philosophers, as practising it. Still, he fails to make clear that the one kind of theorist who, whatever details he may study incidentally, cannot afford to ignore the standards of proportionateness is the philosopher, especially when his aim is to formulate an adequate "philosophy of life." In fact, the trouble is not that the philosopher is held to these standards, but that they are so hard to discover. Actual life so perplexingly and even cruelly confuses the standards, that it requires trained insight to discern them in the welter of first appearances. Again, though doubting, investigating, and the trying-out of hypotheses are instrumental to theorizing, yet essentially it consists, not in doubting but in contemplating. This is true not only because, after all, we do reach conclusions. It



is true chiefly because in philosophy, as we may say in direct challenge to Perry's dictum, to theorize is to apply to the interpretation of life the insight gained from one's best, if rarest, experiences. In the dust of the daily road we need the hill-top views. The philosopher, above every other kind of theorist, requires the eye for the fundamental realities which only his deeper experiences adequately reveal. This is, after all, the spirit in which Perry himself philosophizes when he urges upon our acceptance his view of man as striving to transform the world by the realization of his ethical ideals. There he does not "doubt." He communicates his insight into life—or, to use William James's terms, his "vision," his "mode of feeling the whole push of life."<sup>23</sup> This is, so we suggest, an example of the kind of thinking on which we ought to model our theory of what "theory" is and does. A philosopher owes it to his own enterprise to describe theory where he finds it at its best. And that is not where it operates amidst the necessary abstractions of science, but where, as in philosophy, it seeks "to see life steadily and see it whole."

It is but another way of putting this same point to say that such a thing as Perry's "philosophy of life" carries us at once beyond his own antithesis of "belief" and "theory." That it does so, is all to the good. For, if we may judge from the great thinkers, a Plato, a Spinoza, a Kant, or a Hegel, the divorce of theory and belief is not characteristic of philosophy at its best. Such philosophy is too deeply rooted in the realities of experience to cease "believing" (in Perry's sense) merely because it reflects and investigates. The experiences which illuminate life and teach one to read its values aright carry, so to speak, their own guarantee. There is nothing hypothetical about them. Whatever stability and

<sup>23</sup> *A Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 20, 1.

steadfastness we need in life we must draw from them. It is precisely the function of the kind of theory which we call philosophical, to seize upon these insights and make them available for the interpretation of our world. But thus understood, philosophy takes us once for all beyond the stage where man needs to "convert theoretical probabilities into subjective certainties and to believe more than he knows."

Our concept of philosophy supplies us with a point of view from which to weigh what Perry has to say about the difference between religion and science, and the relation of philosophy to both. "Religion," we read, "has to do with the general character of nature as a whole, or with whatever may lie beyond nature and still belong to the environment of life." It is essentially "a plan of action," "man's hope or despair of salvation." It springs from the need for "a final adaptation," for coming to terms, as it were, once and for all with God, this being "the name for the over-ruling powers as sources of fortune." Whether this description of religion in biological terms of environment and adaptation is adequate, we need not now stop to consider. For the moment we are interested only in its relation to science and philosophy. Science, we are told, is the pure embodiment of the theoretical motive, that is, of disinterested curiosity. Religion similarly is the pure embodiment of the practical motive, that is, the highly interested desire for a plan of action which shall secure the maximum of good fortune from the environment as a whole. But obviously "an enlightened and therefore effective religion" requires itself to be based on a thorough theoretical understanding of this environment, not in its proximate details but in its general and ultimate features. Not science but only philosophy can meet this requirement, for only philosophy deals theoretically with ultimates. Whence it follows that "as popular or applied science is related to

pure science, so religion is related to pure philosophy." And again, "it is as important for religion to promote the development of a rigorously theoretical philosophy, as it is for engineering to promote the development of theoretical physics." The qualification "rigorously theoretical" covers the demand that during the course of the inquiry the passions be repressed and the application of results to life ignored, lest hopes and fears beget illusions and dreams. "Religion is no exception to the rule that man conquers his environment and moulds it into good through forgetting his fears and renouncing his hopes, until he shall have disciplined himself to see coolly and steadily." Now religion, as Perry says elsewhere, is the embodiment of man's "optimistic bias."<sup>24</sup> Being "belief," it is the spirit of hope and confidence which sustains him in energetic living, that hope of "salvation" which, for Perry, seems to coincide with "moulding the environment into good." From all this we may conjecture for philosophy, as the theoretical basis of religion, a threefold task. On the one hand it must, in the critical and unprejudiced manner of science, examine the ultimate nature of the environment of human life as a mere matter of fact. On the other it must, with like disinterestedness, study what things are good or have value in virtue of the fact that human beings desire them. Presumably it must also rationalize these desires and their goods, i.e., organize them into a harmonious system, securing the maximum fulfilment of desire and the maximum realization of what is good. Lastly, philosophy will have to decide whether, the facts being what they are, the maximum fulfilment of interests, or at least a progress towards increasingly complete fulfilment, is possible. If so, we shall be justified in "believing," that is, in labouring with zest and confidence for making the world an ever better and more satisfactory place for hu-

<sup>24</sup> *The Moral Economy*, Chap. VI, p. 231.



man beings to live in. This is what Perry calls "the Baconian idea," the "axiom of modern civilization." "The good is to be won by the race and for the race; it lies in the future, and can result only from prolonged and collective endeavor; and the power to achieve it lies in the progressive knowledge and control of nature."<sup>25</sup> Science, so we may sum up his view in our own words, supplies the detailed knowledge of causes and effects, without which action would be impossible for lack of means. Philosophy investigates whether as a whole nature is favourable to the realization of human desires, that is, plastic to human action. Religion turns philosophy's verdict into belief and thus supplies the dynamic element. Its watchword, one feels, ought to be, Full steam ahead for efficiency and reform. Such is, as a matter of fact, the account of the theoretical content of religion, or "religious truth," which Perry offers in his *Moral Economy*.<sup>26</sup> Religious truth consists of ethical judgements concerning human interests ("what the believer has at stake"), and cosmological judgements concerning the environment at large, which in its bearing on the worshipper's interests is called "God."

On the whole theory a single comment will suffice at this stage of our argument. Perry's account of religion entirely ignores the *mystical* element in it. The biological language in which he has cast his description, only serves to throw this neglect into bolder relief. Hence his treatment cannot but strike as inadequate all who regard mystical experience as the intensest and purest form of religion. For such an utterance of religious experience as St. Paul's "Not I, but God that worketh in me," there is no room within Perry's formula. In discussing religion, it is inevitable that every

<sup>25</sup> Present Philosophical Tendencies, pp. 4, 5.

<sup>26</sup> Chap. VI, on "The Moral Justification of Religion," originally printed in the Harvard Theological Review, Vol. II, April, 1909.

thinker should reveal himself, that he should lay bare, as the basis of his argument, the type of experience through which he "feels his continuity with reality." For Perry this is clearly moral enthusiasm, the reformer's zeal for the bettering of his world through the realization of his ideals. This he offers as the essence of religion—what religion ought to be, what at its best it is. Though one feels tempted to say that he sacrifices religion to morality, yet such a zeal for progress in human welfare, for rendering service to the cause of reform, for fighting against evil in all its guises, is clearly something without which religion would be poor and ineffective. The question is whether, as it stands, this is equivalent to religion. The answer, it is hardly possible to doubt, must be No. Religion after all is an historical fact in the lives of men and, dogma apart, has found expression in utterance and conduct in so many forms that a comparative study not only reveals the main "varieties of religious experience," but enables us also to discriminate higher and lower forms—experiences, or lives, in which the distinctive and unique character of religion is more completely and adequately exhibited than in others. One might instance Christ or St. Paul or St. Francis. No combination of cosmology and ethics, welded together from a biological point of view, such as Perry offers, seizes the distinctive quality of religion as these "men of God" exhibit it. A philosophical theory of religion which fails to include, not merely one variety of religious experience among others but the most characteristic and revealing variety of all, namely, mysticism, offends against the canon of philosophical interpretation of experience which we laid down above.

## III.

But the real trial of strength between these two ways of using experiences as material for philosophical theory, and thus extracting from them that wisdom which both is true as insight and imparts the right temper to conduct, is still to come. The issue so far has been whether religion, as a matter of experience, is identical with "moral enthusiasm," especially when this enthusiasm wears the biological air of an effort so to control and modify the environment that it becomes a better place for men to live in. As the alternative to this we have taken the view that religion, while involving morality as an element within itself, yet is as a whole a distinctive type of experience, of which the keynote is mysticism. The real touchstone of the adequacy of these two views, as we are now about to see, is the problem presented by the fact of evil.

To clear the ground for fruitful debate, let us put aside irrelevant topics and set down explicitly what is common ground for both sides. As irrelevant we shall regard the familiar dialectical puzzle how a perfect whole can consist of imperfect parts, or, to put the puzzle in theological language, how the existence of sin, error, and evil is consistent with the creation of the universe by God defined as all-wise, all-good, all-powerful. Let it be agreed that evil is neither an illusion nor yet something willed and planned as adding zest and spice to the perfection of the cosmic spectacle for a divine spectator. We will have no God enjoying from the stalls the tragedy of human sin and suffering enacted on the stage. Nor does experience support the suggestion that evil is as unsubstantial as a dream. Such interpretations pervert the judgement of perfection, the roots of which in our experience it will be our task to search out.



Again, let it be agreed that our world and our lives show a pattern of mingled good and ill, and that under these conditions there is as much need for the steadfastness of mind which endures suffering patiently and is not debauched by good fortune, as there is for the moral struggle to defeat evil and realize good. Doing one's best, the "full deliverance of one's self to the cause of goodness," as Perry finely puts it,<sup>27</sup> is essential to happiness, by which we mean the sense that life is worth while. We shall make no attempt to call the universe "perfect" in any sense which makes morality meaningless.

Yet again, let it be agreed that we are not to make out a case for or against a surplus of pleasure over pain, nor to show every item of pain and wrong to be overbalanced or cancelled by some compensating joy or good. Least of all shall we pretend that evil is somehow good in disguise, or borrow the convenient philosophy of Pangloss in Voltaire's *Candide*: "Les malheurs particuliers font le bien général, de sort que plus il y a de malheurs particuliers, plus tout est bien."

All these issues being set aside, what issue remains? Where do we differ? The point of deep difference may be put in a nut-shell by placing side by side two sentences from Perry's *Moral Economy*: "If life is a real tragedy, it can be endured, and to enter into it will bring the deep satisfaction which every form of heroism affords."<sup>28</sup> And, "The moment evil is conceived as the necessary but diminishing complement to partial success, the sting of it is gone. Evil as a temporary and accidental necessity is tolerable; but not so an evil which is absolutely necessary, and which must be construed with some hypothetical divine satisfaction."<sup>29</sup> We have agreed above to put aside as irrelevant the appeal to a hypothetical divine satisfaction. We are to argue on the

<sup>27</sup> The Moral Economy, p. 254.

<sup>28</sup> Loc. cit., p. 251.

<sup>29</sup> Loc. cit., p. 249.

basis of human experience, taking it where it is at its best. Thus approached the question is whether the arduous and heroic life with the conditions, that is, the pain and the evil which evoke heroism, is worth while, enduringly and for its own sake, or whether morality is worth while only on the prospect of the final eradication of evil and therefore the abolition of morality itself. The issue is put misleadingly as a choice between "the practical optimism or meliorism which stakes its hope on the chance that the world *may be made* better," and "the contemplative or quietistic optimism, which consists in the faith that the world *is* best."<sup>30</sup> The alternatives are not moral endeavour *versus* moral holiday, doing one's best *versus* doing nothing, fighting evil *versus* resignedly acquiescing in it. The only question worth asking and answering in this matter is, What kind of life, and under what conditions, is fundamentally most worth while as enabling us to make the most of ourselves—life in this actual world of ours with its suffering and evil, or life, as the meliorist's fancy paints it, in a world without either? If the decision is, as we hold it must be, in favour of the former alternative, then the meliorist is deluding us with his promise of a world which, in James's phrase, has been made to "forget the very place and name of evil."<sup>31</sup> He is falsifying the very spirit of morality by his suggestion that only as a means to the realization of such a world is morality really worth while.

More abstractly the problem might be put in the form of the question, Is the value of evil purely negative, as of something to be once and for all eliminated, or is it so closely interwoven with the whole tissue of this double-edged life of ours that it is not only ineradicable as a matter of fact but positively valuable as the condition

<sup>30</sup> Present Philosophical Tendencies, p. 248.

<sup>31</sup> Pragmatism, p. 297.

without which other values cannot be had? It should be clearly noted that in asking this question, we have left behind the level where desire and aversion, the things towards which and the things against which we are moved, are polar opposites. We are asked to survey life *as a whole*, with its values and their conditions. And "as a whole" means that we are not now to pick and choose, saying we would like to retain this and rather do without that. It means that once we understand the sources of all that is valuable, we shall find evil among these; and we shall find further that if evil were to be eliminated, utterly and in principle, the things which are good would not survive it. It is this reflection which underlies the "judgement of perfection" and leads in a sense to an acceptance of evil, and to a preference for the actual world with evil over an imaginary world without evil. Only let it be noted that this acceptance is not resignation nor a betrayal of morality. It rather begets loyalty to morality by dispelling the illusion that an evil-less, painless world is both possible and, from the profoundest point of view, desirable. Thus the "judgement of perfection" does not contradict or cancel morality, for it is made from a point of view which may be described in all seriousness as "beyond good and evil."

It is not merely as an *argumentum ad hominem*, but as an illustration of the way in which the logic of experience will over-ride the prejudices of inadequate theory, that we shall quote a professed and eager meliorist in support of our contention. The meliorism of William James is part of the friendly philosophical polemic which he carried on against Royce's defence of the perfection of the universe. That defence James labelled "tender-minded," apparently under the impression that somehow a denial of the reality of evil was involved. But it would appear to require a "tougher"

courage to accept both evil and the fight against it as among the *permanent* "hazards and hardships" of finite life than to console oneself with the hope of a world in which there shall be neither. At any rate, James himself, on occasions, when he happily forgot his meliorism, showed himself possessed of this very courage, and made his choice of lives accordingly. There is the famous and oft-quoted passage describing his visit to the Assembly Grounds on Chautauqua Lake.<sup>32</sup> He sets out eloquently the absence of disease, poverty, drunkenness, crime, and the realization of the meliorist's dream. "You have culture, you have kindness, you have cheapness, you have equality, you have the best of what mankind has fought and bled and striven for under the name of civilization for centuries. You have, in short, a foretaste of what society might be, were it all in the light, with no suffering and no dark corners." Yet after seven days of this "middle-class paradise, without a sin, without a victim, without a blot, without a tear," he bursts out, on emerging again into the dark and wicked world with "Ouf! what a relief! Now for something primordial and savage, even though it were as bad as an Armenian massacre, to set the balance straight again. . . . Let me take my chances again in the big outside worldly wilderness with all its sins and sufferings . . . all its moral style, expressiveness and picturesqueness—the element of precipitousness, of strength and strenuousness, intensity and danger."

In this utterance and in the experience which it records we have the very logic of the "judgement of perfection," the acknowledgment that this actual world of ours *is the best* world, in the sense that it is the kind of world in which it is most worth while to live. Beside it melioristic dreams fade into nothingness.

<sup>32</sup> Talks to Teachers on Psychology and Life's Ideals, pp. 268 ff.—quoted and discussed by B. Bosanquet, *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, pp. 332 ff.



Those for whom the "judgement of perfection" expresses the deepest insight into these matters, accept evil and the struggle against evil as permanent features of the universe, and they accept life in this universe on these terms as supremely worth while. They accept it, not with a gesture of despair or condemnation but, like James, confidently and even joyously, content to play a man's part and fulfil a man's destiny under the conditions of finite existence. They accept life, as the marriage-service has it, "for better, for worse." Is this optimism? Is this pessimism? Our classificatory pigeon-holes will not contain such an attitude. It is a recognition of value which carries us, as we said, "beyond good and evil." As the spirit of daily living it is religion. As reflective theory it is philosophy, and, paradoxically enough, though usually called "idealism," it is really the only philosophy which is realistic to the bitter end.

## ANGELUS SILESIUS: A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MYSTIC

FREDERIC PALMER

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

During the last quarter-century more investigation than ever before has been going on into the unconscious activities of the human mind, or, as the investigators have preferred to call it, the sub-conscious mind. This has led in psychology to the study of apparitions and the various forms of telepathy, and in religion to a revival of Quietism. Religious bodies as far from Quakerism as the Episcopal Church are holding retreats for meditation, silent prayer, "the practice of the presence of God." The exclusion of worldly thought is pointed to as the means for the opening of the soul to the incoming of the Divine; and some are following the Mystic Way through its steps of Purgation, Illumination, and Ecstasy to its goal of absorption into God in the Unitive Life.

This revived interest at the present time in Mysticism is not surprising. For in an age which is devoted to efficiency and moved largely by machinery, when thought is subordinated to action, and the quality most highly prized is power, there will always be those who turn away in sadness and disgust from the rush of effort and seek to find God by walking in the garden in the cool of the day; who adjust themselves to receiving, confident that from all sides the universe will pour its wealth into them if they do but furnish capacity for reception. They turn to those who in the midst of their strenuous

activities are distrustful of any attainment except through effort, and say,

“Think you, ’mid all this mighty sum  
Of things for ever speaking,  
That nothing of itself will come,  
But we must still be seeking?”

It was when the might of paganism was asserting itself under Diocletian against Christianity that the Fayoum was filled by St. Anthony and his monks. Meister Eckart, Tauler, and Ruysbroeck lived in a world busy with petty wars and petty politics. And it was in 1624, shortly after the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, that Johann Scheffler, afterwards known as Angelus Silesius, was born in Silesia at Breslau or perhaps at Glatz. He is less known than his fourteenth-century predecessors, or even than his master, Jakob Boehme; but he is interesting for the completeness with which he represents the positions of Mysticism and for the daring with which he accepts the conclusions of its logic. Our busy age may well find a lesson in him. After reading his *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* one is inclined to say, as of *The Apocalypse*, “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.”

He was a Lutheran by birth and education, and took to studying medicine at Strassburg, Padua, Leyden, and Amsterdam, with strong interests also in theology and poetry. After taking his doctor's degree in philosophy and medicine at Padua he became, in 1649, court physician to the strongly Lutheran Duke Sylvius Nimrod at Oels in Württemberg. He remained here, however, only three years, and then returned to Breslau. He found the ecclesiastical atmosphere in both places uncongenial. The early glow of the Reformation had given place to the acrimonies and hair-splittings of Protestant scholasticism. The Lutheran was bitter against the Calvin-

ist and the Calvinist against the Lutheran and both against the Zwinglian, and the bitterness of all against one another was often greater than against their common enemy, Rome. Ever since the Psalmist hesitated to announce the message which had brought light to his soul through fear that it would offend the devout, and warned himself — “If I say, ‘I will speak thus,’ behold, I should offend against the generation of Thy children” — through all the ages, the bitterly pious ecclesiastic, narrowly zealous for his own type of orthodoxy, has been the strongest agency in turning men away from religion. And men of this type abounded, both at the Duke’s court and in Silesia. Jakob Boehme, who died in the year Scheffler was born, had been brow-beaten and silenced for five years by an aggressive clerical guardian of Protestant orthodoxy in Silesia; and a half-century later Duke Sylvius’s court preacher fell foul of the court physician. Protestantism, as Scheffler met it, was unlovely. Its emphasis upon doctrine, its straining at the gnat of conformity while swallowing the camel of un-Christlikeness, its suspicion of good works, and the coldness with which it regarded that immediate union with God which its own son, Boehme, had claimed, all combined with the unattractiveness of those who were its representatives to turn Scheffler from it. There are people of whom we say, “They are good, but” —; and that “but” is like Pharaoh’s lean kine, which devoured all the fat kine that were before them. So it was with those who to Scheffler stood for Protestantism; and on June 12, 1653, he abandoned it and entered the Roman Catholic Church. He had the zeal of the new convert; he would shake off the very dust of Protestantism from his feet. And so he adopted a new name. It had been his growing interest in Mysticism which had helped in bringing him into his new surroundings. He took, consequently, for a kind of godfather a Spanish



Mystic of the sixteenth century, Johannes de Angelis, and borrowing his name, called himself Johannes Angelus. But as there was a contemporary Protestant doctor of theology by that name, he could not risk the contamination of being confused with him, and he therefore appended the distinguishing adjective "Silesius," from the province of his birth, and he was known thereafter as Johannes Angelus Silesius.

He must previously have gained some distinction; for in less than a year after his conversion the Austrian Emperor, Frederick III, conferred on him the title of court physician. It was in this case only a title, the position carrying no duties and no income, but giving him the standing of a distinguished person and shielding him from the annoyances which his ecclesiastical change might involve. For seven years now he devoted himself to the study of dogmatics, and to perhaps composing, certainly publishing, his two chief poetical works. The first, appearing in 1657, had the title, *Geistreiche Sinn- und Schlussreime*. This title was changed in the second edition to *Johannis Angeli Silesii Cherubinischer Wandersmann*. *Geistreiche Sinn- und Schlussreime zur göttlichen Beschaulichkeit anleitende*. A second poem or collection of poems, which appeared almost at once, showing that it had been composed before the publication of the first, was headed *Heilige Seelenlust, oder geistliche Hirtenlieder der in ihren Jesum verliebten Psyche; gesungen von Johann Angelo Silesio und von Herrn Georgio Josepho mit ausbündig schönen Melodien geziert*.

In 1651 he entered the Franciscan Order and was consecrated priest. His prominence in the affairs of the Church in Breslau led some of his former Protestant associates to circulate scurrilous songs attacking him. He shortly afterwards replied in a pamphlet, in which he ascribed the recent victories of the Turks to a judgment of God for the secession of the Protestants from

the Church of Rome. The Lutheran theologians were naturally not inclined to this view, and several prominent among them replied; and so began an unedifying controversy, with all the polemic heat, the sharpness of tongue and personal vilification, which the time regarded as proper in discussion. It is always easier to set a dog barking than to stop him by the soundest arguments. In twelve years Scheffler published fifty-five blasts against the Protestants, bitter as aloes but without their wholesomeness. One can readily see how the arm of even so doughty a champion might by that time have grown weary, and why he gradually grew tired of making faces. Many of his Catholic friends too were not altogether pleased at having him as their representative. He was persuaded to retire from active conflict, and was allowed to choose the chief smooth stones out of the brook with which he had slain his Philistines and publish them under the title "*Ecclesiologia, bestehend in 39 verschiedenen auserwählten Traktätlein.*" He had been a person of importance in the State as well as the Church; for in 1664 he had been appointed marshal and counselor to the prince-bishop of Breslau, a position which gave weight to the polemics in which he was engaged. But the slackening of his polemical ardor coincided with the death of his friend Sebastian, the prince-bishop, and in 1671 he resigned his offices and retired to the monastery of St. Matthias in Breslau. Here for six years he was occupied in editing his works and communing with his soul. He apparently never saw the opposition between the two, nor felt it strange that one whose ideal was expressed in the popular hymn,

"Ruhe ist das beste Gut  
Das mann haben kann,"

should find his great interest and chief occupation in the hot activities of acrimonious polemics. Just after

the publication in 1677 of his *Ecclesiologia*, the arsenal of his munitions of war, he died. His conviction that to one spiritually minded the things of the flesh, including pain, are nothing —

“Mensch, bist du Gott getreu, und meinst Ihn allein,  
So wird die grösste Noth ein Paradies dir seyn” (I, 131)....<sup>1</sup>

this conviction was put to the test by a severe and painful illness. To him, as to many another Christian, the process of being unclothed was one in which he groaned, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon. Yet while one hand remained entangled in earthly things, the other with its firm grip on heaven was ever lifting him upward.

I have spoken of his poetry as comprised in two volumes. He published a third in 1675 entitled *Johannis Angeli Silesii Beschreibung der vier letzten Dinge*. It is a vivid portrayal of death, the Judgment Day, the eternal pains of the damned, and the eternal joys of the saved, which he hoped would convert the impenitent. But, like most sulphurous whiffs of the atmosphere of hell, the flavor of brimstone repels one from the preacher rather than from the place, or else is discounted as unreal and passed by with derision, while the joys ascribed to heaven are pallid and unattractive to warm-blooded humanity. There is hardly any kinship between this attempt to get the accounts of the world ready for the Day of Judgment and the *Heilige Seelenlust* or the *Geistreiche Schlussreime*. The Cherubinischer Wandersmann did not travel into this grim country.

The *Heilige Seelenlust*, whose extended title I have already given, is a mild decoction of *Solomon's Song*. The love of the soul or Psyche for Jesus is set forth in the sensuous, sometimes sensual, terms of physical passion which have been not uncommon in minds where

<sup>1</sup> “Art thou but true to God, seeking no other gain,  
Thou wilt find Paradise even in the sharpest pain.”

ecstasy has followed meditation. Of the two hundred and five poems which the volume contains, most are to a modern reader simply dull. The expression of love and longing rarely rises above the commonplace. Of the five Books into which it is divided, the first three form an orderly whole. The Saviour is accompanied on his journey through life from his birth to his ascension, and the soul exults in union with him here and hereafter. The other two Books, published later and separately, contain poems on the spiritual life but unrelated to one another.

The *Heilige Seelenlust* is a mine in which the compilers of hymn-books have dug. Heinrich Müller's *Geistliche Seelenmusik*, which appeared in 1669, only two years after the publication of Scheffler's book, contained thirty-one hymns taken from it. In the course of the next half-century half a dozen hymn-books acknowledged their debt to it, and sometimes the debt was large; as in case of the *Freylinghausen Gesangbuch*, which included fifty-two out of Scheffler's two hundred and five pieces. The hymnologists of the Pietistic Movement found Scheffler's ardent commonplaces to their taste and borrowed them even more fully. In the more recent Evangelical hymn-books some still retain their place. Among these are

- "Liebe, die du mich zum Bilde" (II, 338),
- "Ich will dich lieben, meine Stärke" (I, 30),
- "Mir nach spricht Christus unser Held" (V, 580),
- "Ich danke dir für deinen Tod" (I, 190),
- "Jesus ist der schönste Nahm" (I, 103).

Some have been translated into English, or rather paraphrased; the first of those above mentioned by Miss Winkworth, beginning

"O Love, who formedst me to wear  
The image of Thy Godhead here";



and the second by John Wesley,

"Thee will I love, my strength and tower."

Miss Winkworth has also translated

"Morgenstern du finstren Nacht" (I, 80).

"Morning Star, in darksome night."

Other translations are the following:

"Komm Liebsten komm in deinen Garten" (III, 289).

"Make my heart a garden fair" (Miss Cox).

"Jesus ist die schönste Nahm" (I, 103).

"Jesus is the highest name" (A. T. Russell).

"Wo wiltu hin weils Abends ist" (II, 217),

"Where wilt thou go? since night draws near" (A. Crull).

The hymns of Angelus Silesius have kept his name alive in Germany. But the world there and elsewhere has been discovering a weightier ground of remembrance in his first volume — *Geistliche Sinn- und Schlussreime*, or, as it is commonly called from the addition to the title in the second edition, the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*. Man, so the title would indicate, is but a traveler here below, with no abiding place; but through union with God he acquires a super-earthly life and lasting peace, like that of the heaven-inhabiting cherubim. This union of opposites, the earthly and the heavenly, is the ground-tone running throughout the poem. Perhaps it should hardly be called a poem, since that implies more or less unity. The theme on which he is engaged is so great and manifold that endeavoring to reduce it to system would be like attempting to drive one of the beasts of *The Revelation* with seven heads and ten horns, with each head trying to go its own way. So he lets it

take its way, and gives us here a collection of aphorisms, chiefly couplets in Alexandrine verse, having relation to the general theme but little to one another. To attempt therefore to read many of them at a time is like riding in a jolting cart over a rough road, and is unwise. They are rather to be treated in the way our Puritan forefathers took the Bible, when they bit off a verse or two in the morning and chewed on them throughout the day. The mastication of Scheffler's verses is not facilitated by beauty of style, for they are so condensed that they must dispense with amplifications and embellishments. To compare him with his immediate predecessors in English poetry: he has no kinship with the beauty-loving school of Spenser; he has much in common with the hard-thinking, close-knit phraseology of the school of Donne. Moreover he is not a master of technique; he is more intent upon matter than manner, and is often put to bald shifts to subdue his verse. He has his favorite tags which help him to conquer a refractory line — "Mensch, glaube mir," "ich weiss," "kann ich kühnlich sagen," "für und für." These often come in handy when he has said his say but is compelled by the exigence of his metre to fill out the required number of feet. Many of his verses are commonplace. Many are commonplace to us because they were revelations in his day. But there is in many of them a profundity of insight, a depth of feeling, a passion for God, and above all a daring in boldly claiming the conclusions which the logic of his theology carries, which make one who has known him unable to forget him. And occasionally he stumbles into beauty. There is in these couplets a kind of fragrant perfume, such as Isaac detected in his son's garments: "The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed."

His fundamental position is that God is love. But love means sharing, sharing one's best, sharing all one's

best. And one's best is ever himself. God therefore is for ever endeavoring to pour Himself into us, to give us all of Himself that we are capable of receiving.

"Gott gibet Niemand nichts; Er stehet allen frey,  
Dass Er, wo du nur Ihn so willst, ganz deine sey" (I, 21).<sup>2</sup>

"Gott liebet mich allein; nach mir ist Ihn so bange  
Dass Er auch stirbt vor Angst, weil ich Ihm nicht anhangen"  
(III, 37).<sup>3</sup>

Such bountifulness on God's part must result in endowing the soul with all the amplitude of God's own nature.

"Ich bin so gross als Gott; Er ist als ich so klein.  
Er kann nich über mich, ich unter Ihm nicht seyn" (I, 10).<sup>4</sup>

This union with God results in the annihilation of time and place and makes eternity present.

"Nicht du bist in dem Ort; der Ort, der ist in dir.  
Wirfst du hinaus, so steht die Ewigkeit schon hier" (I, 185).<sup>5</sup>

"Zeit ist wie Ewigkeit und Ewigkeit wie Zeit,  
So du nur selber nicht machst einen Unterscheid" (I, 47).<sup>6</sup>

"Mensch, wo du deinen Geist schwingst über Ort und Zeit,  
So kannst du jeden Blick seyn in der Ewigkeit" (I, 12).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "God thrusts Himself on none; He stands for all men free.  
So that whate'er thou wilt, He may be unto thee."

<sup>3</sup> "God loves the special Me. Anxious for me He is;  
So that He would expire of grief, were I not His."

<sup>4</sup> "God is small as I; I am as great as He.  
He cannot above me, nor I beneath Him be."

<sup>5</sup> "Thou dwellest not in space, but space, it is in thee.  
Cast it out, and already is eternity."

<sup>6</sup> "Eternity is as time, time as eternity.  
If they are otherwise, the difference is in thee."

<sup>7</sup> "Lift up thy soul o'er time and space. The spirit's power  
Shall give thee even here eternity each hour."

Both heaven and hell are annihilated.

"Wo in der Hölle nicht kann ohne Hölle leben,  
Der hat sich noch nicht ganz dem Höchsten übergeben" (I, 39).<sup>8</sup>

'Mensch, wird das Paradies in dir nicht erstlich seyn,  
So glaube mir gewiss, du kommest nimmer drein" (I, 295).<sup>9</sup>

The efficient agent of the Divine judgments is therefore transferred from without to within the soul.

"Der Himmel ist in dir und auch der Höllen Qual.  
Was du erkiest und willst, das hast du überall" (I, 145).<sup>10</sup>

"Was klagst du über Gott? Du selbst verdamdest dich.  
Er möcht' es ja nicht thun, das glaube sicherlich" (I, 137).<sup>11</sup>

This identification of the Divine judgments with the inner workings of the soul has become in the last half-century familiar to us. But it was by no means familiar to the men of Scheffler's day. The reign of law was then viewed as far more limited in range than since the great rise of scientific knowledge in the last century. To the thought of the men of the seventeenth century events not the direct result of human effort are from the arbitrary will and imposing hand of God. He reaches down from the skies and gives blessings here and punishments there. He takes this man to heaven and sends that one to hell, and there is no telling beforehand what will be the fate of either. Silesius himself in his *Sinnliche Beschreibung* revels in depicting heaven and hell as localities, and describing their pleasures and pains

<sup>8</sup> "He who in hell — note this! — without hell cannot live,  
To his own Best himself as yet he does not give."

<sup>9</sup> "If with thee Paradise exist not first within,  
Then, trust me well, thou ne'er wilt come therein."

<sup>10</sup> "Heaven is in thee, and also in thee is hell's pain.  
Whate'er thou wilt, whate'er thou choosest, thou dost gain."

<sup>11</sup> "But why complain of God, when it is thou alone  
Canst ever damn thyself? He sentences no one."



as poured upon the soul from outside itself. This is the conventional method of religious speech. But into his contemporaries, trained to look thus to a future state for the assessment of moral values, Silesius drove a deeper thought when he proclaimed that the character of the soul not only determines its status but is its status.

"Wie magst du was begehren? Du selber kannst allein  
Der Himmel und die Erd' und tausend Engel seyn" (II, 149).<sup>12</sup>

Not that he was the first to make this discovery, for it was but the development of the Johannine thought, "This is life eternal—to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent"; "This is damnation—that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." It was but the consequence of the Pauline thought, in which Christ not only speaks to the soul, not only speaks in the soul, but is identical with the true condition of the soul itself. Silesius, however, was one of the first to proclaim in modern times that the soul is itself the agent in establishing automatically what had been regarded as externally imposed judgments of God.

In carrying out to its full range the conclusion which the logic of the situation authorizes, Angelus Silesius, like Isaiah, is very bold. If God gives Himself to man, then man, in so far, becomes God. Indeed, Silesius in his joyous flight is not always particular to put in the "in so far." He too will declare "I and my Father are one."

"Mensch, was du liebst, in das wirst du verwandelt werden;  
Gott wirst du, liebst du Gott, und Erde, liebst du Erden"

(V, 200).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "Wherefore desir'st thou aught? since thou thyself may'st even  
Be earth and myriad angels and the very heaven."

<sup>13</sup> "Whate'er thou lovest, Man, that too become thou must;  
God, if thou lovest God; dust, if thou lovest dust."

“Ein grundgelassner Mensch ist ewig frey und Ein.  
Kann auch ein Unterscheid an ihm und Gotte seyn?” (II, 141).<sup>14</sup>

“Wer ist als wär’ er nicht, und wär’ er nie geworden,  
Der ist (o Seligkeit!) zu lauter Gotte worden” (I, 92).<sup>15</sup>

In the Preface to the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, however, he explains what he means by this oneness with God. It is not strange that he felt the necessity of explanation if such terms as “Vergöttung” and “Gottwerdung” were to pass the ecclesiastical censor. Even with his explanation it seems remarkable that the book received the “Approbatio” of the Jesuit judge and the “Imprimatur” of the Rector of the University of Vienna. Here is his bidding for orthodoxy:

“Inasmuch as the following rhymes contain many unusual paradoxes or contradictory expressions and many profound conclusions not familiar to every one in regard to the mystery of the Godhead — as, for example, union with God or with the Divine being, the Divine likeness, deification, becoming God, and the like — expressions to which, on account of the condensed style, one might easily ascribe a reprehensible sense or give an evil meaning, it is necessary to warn the reader in advance.

“It must be understood once for all that the author’s meaning is in no case that the human soul should or can lose its created character and become changed through deification into God or His uncreated being. For though God is almighty, this He cannot do — and if He could, He would not be God — to make a creature God by nature and essence. So Tauler says in his spiritual instructions: ‘Since the Most High cannot make us gods by nature, for this belongs to Him alone, He has made us gods by grace, so that we may have blessedness, joy, and one and the same kingdom with Him in everlasting love.’ He means by this that the favored holy soul may attain such close union with God and His Divine being as to be penetrated by it through and through, transformed, united with it and made one; so that when

<sup>14</sup> “One who is freed from earth has wholeness, liberty.  
How betwixt him and God can any difference be?”

<sup>15</sup> “Who is as he were not, as he had never been,  
Has become very God. O blessedness serene!”

men see it, they will see and recognize in it no other than God. It will be as it is in the life eternal, when the soul is wholly swallowed up by the brightness of the Divine majesty. It will indeed attain such complete likeness to God as to be through grace what God is by nature, and thus in a sense may rightly be called, as in these verses, a god in God."<sup>16</sup>

It was a reversal of the usual order of progress, according to which the heresy of one generation becomes the orthodoxy of the next, that such opinions could be approved by ecclesiastical authority in 1657, and in 1687 for holding the same opinions Molinos could be condemned to the dungeons of the Inquisition.

In setting forth the means by which this union with God is to be attained Silesius emphasizes strongly the central doctrine of Mysticism — dualism. The Divine and the human are different; more than that, they are mutually exclusive; the finite is the opposite of the infinite, so that the more of one the less of the other. The only way then by which they can come together is by one ceasing to be itself. As it is unthinkable that God can be the one to change and approach man, it must be on man's side that the approach is made. Man must empty himself of all that is characteristic of humanity; not only of positive sin but of all desire, will, endeavor, which in this view become sin. He must become nothing; and the more completely he succeeds in this self-annihilation, the more completely he becomes one with God. There was in the seventeenth century no study of comparative religion to point out to Silesius his kinship with Buddhism, and he had probably never heard of Plotinus. His spiritual ancestors were Meister Eckhart, Tauler, and most directly, as I have said, Boehme, though he does not care to mention him after his own conversion to Romanism. His was the world-old line of thought which dwells on the otherness of God, and

<sup>16</sup> *Der Cherubinischer Wandersmann* (ed. Sulzbach, 1829); Vorrede, pp. vi, vii.

which meets us today in the Roman Mass, in popular theories of the Atonement, and in the revivalist's song,

"O to be nothing, nothing!  
Only to lie at His feet,  
A broken and empty vessel  
For the Master's uses meet!"

Silesius is continually pressing home the need of this self-emptying and of thorough-goingness in it, and describing the blissful condition which results. For this he has many names — Abgeschiedenheit, Abgestorbenheit, Vernichtigkeit, Ledigkeit, Gelassenheit, Heiligkeit, Gleichheit, Seligkeit, Friede, Ruhe. When the process is complete and one has reached "gänzliche Verneinung des Willens," he has attained "Vergöttung."

"Die Heiligen sind darum mit Gottes Ruh umfungen  
Und haben Seligkeit, weil sie nach nichts verlangen" (I, 169).<sup>17</sup>

"Mensch, so du etwas liebst, so liebst du nichts fürwahr.  
Gott ist nicht diess und das; drum lass das Etwas gar" (I, 44).<sup>18</sup>

"Nicht bringt dich über dich, als die Vernichtigkeit.  
Wer mehr vernichtig ist, der hat mehr Göttlichkeit" (II, 140).<sup>19</sup>

"Geh aus, so geht Gott ein; stirbt dir, so lebst du Gott;  
Sey nicht, so ist es Er; thu nichts, so g'schieht's Gebot"  
(II, 136).<sup>20</sup>

Logic again drives him. "Then if desire is evil, you must not desire even God." "True," replies he sturdily:

"Ein wahrer armer Mensch steht ganz auf nichts gericht.  
Gibt Gott ihm gleich sich selbst, ich weiss, er nimmt Ihn nicht"  
(II, 148).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> "They who are held in God's sweet peace are blest in this —  
That they have no desire; therefore they dwell in bliss."

<sup>18</sup> "Thou lovest not aright, lov'st thou aught here below.  
God is not This nor That; so let the Somethings go."

<sup>19</sup> "Nought raises thee above thyself like nothingness.  
God is the more in thee as thou thyself art less."

<sup>20</sup> "Go out, and God comes in; die, God thy soul will fill.  
Be not, and there is He; do nought, He has His will."

<sup>21</sup> "One who is truly poor, no compromise can make.  
Should God give him Himself, even this he would not take."



Even Christ had to conform to this rigid law of willlessness:

“Auch Christus, wär in Ihm ein kleiner eigener Wille,  
Wie selig Er auch ist, Mensch! glaube mir, Er fiele” (V, 32).<sup>22</sup>

Like every profound thinker, Silesius does not balk at the necessity of holding opposites. Consistency is not to be attained by an “either, or.” He may choose to hold both or neither. He is like a dog hunting. One who looks from a distance might think directness of aim was the last thing to be ascribed to him, as he turns here and there and forwards and backwards; yet all the time, though his path is crooked, his course is straight on the scent. So Silesius, though he has declared that the human will must be wholly dead, yet declares also that it is the will which preserves each in his condition:

“Der Will macht dich verlorn, der Will macht dich gefunden,  
Der Will der macht dich frey, gefesselt und gebunden” (VI, 82).<sup>23</sup>

“Gott kann schon ewiglich nicht die Verdammten finden,  
Weil sie stets durch ihr’n Will’n vor Ihm in Pfuhl verschwinden”  
(VI, 81).<sup>24</sup>

It is not God’s decree but only the Devil’s own perverse will that keeps him a devil; and here Silesius is even more hopeful for the lord of hell than Robert Burns:

“Die Sonne muss ihr Licht all’n, die es woll’n, gewähren.  
Der Teufel wird erleuchtet, wollt’ er zu Gott sich kehren”  
(VI, 40).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> “Christ himself, if he had an atom of self-will,  
However holy too, would not have been Christ still.”

<sup>23</sup> “Thy will, it makes thee lost; thy will, it makes thee found;  
Thy will, it makes thee free, or fast in fetters bound.”

<sup>24</sup> “God cannot find a wretch deep in the pool of hell  
Because it is his fixed will therein to dwell.”

<sup>25</sup> “The sun, on all who turn to him, must brightly burn.  
The Devil’s face would shine, if he to God would turn.”

“Gott ist dem Belzebub nah wie dem Seraphin.  
Es kehrt nur Belzebub den Rücken gegen Ihn”

(V, 72).<sup>26</sup>

Again, while he maintains that the finite must be absorbed in the infinite, he insists that this does not abolish personality. And here, in spite of startling expressions, he parts company from the thorough-going Mystic, who walks straight up to a void Nirvana. But what Silesius welcomes is not annihilation but absorption, when, in presence of the glorious Infinite, all other beings are drowned, like stars in day. Personality, he maintains, persists after death.

“Der Geist lebt in sich selbst. Gebriecht ihm gleich das Licht,  
(Wie ein Verdammt wird) so stirbet er doch nicht” (II, 160).<sup>27</sup>

“Ich glaube keinen Tod. Sterb’ ich gleich alle Stunden,  
So hab ich jedesmal ein besser Leben funden” (I, 30).<sup>28</sup>

“Ich sag, es stirbet nichts; nur dass ein ander Leben,  
Auch selbst das peinliche, wird durch den Tod gegeben” (I, 36).<sup>29</sup>

Such union is so close that it becomes indissoluble; God Himself cannot tear it apart. The particular becomes as necessary to the universal as the universal to the particular. I am essential to God.

“Gott is mir Gott und Mensch; ich bin Ihm Mensch und Gott.  
Ich lösche seinen Durst, und Er hilft mir aus Noth” (I, 224).<sup>30</sup>

“Wer Gott vereinigt ist, den kann Er nicht verdammen;  
Er stürze sich dann selbst mit ihm in Tod und Flammen” (I, 97).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> “God is both to the Fiend and to the Seraph near.  
But the Fiend turns his back on God, and will not hear.”

<sup>27</sup> “Spirit must ever live. It may in darkness lie,  
As do the damned; yet even then it cannot die.”

<sup>28</sup> “There is no death, I hold. Should I die every hour,  
Yet every hour there is a better life in store.”

<sup>29</sup> “Nothing that is, can die. It is but life again  
That follows death, even though a life of fiercest pain.”

<sup>30</sup> “I find in God a man; I find in man a God.  
I slake His thirst, and He must needs help me, a clod.”

<sup>31</sup> “He who is joined to God can suffer no damnation;  
For God Himself would perish in his conflagration.”

"Ich weiss dass ohne mich Gott nicht ein Nun kann leben.  
Werd' ich zu nicht, Er muss von Noth den Geist aufgeben"  
(I, 8).<sup>32</sup>

"Gott mag nicht ohne mich ein einzigs Würmlein machen.  
Erhalt Ich's nicht mit Ihm, so muss es stracks zukrachen"  
(I, 96).<sup>33</sup>

This abolition of distinctions which takes place in man and in his relation to God, is the case with God also. He too, since He is infinite, can have neither passions nor parts; for these would constitute limitation. He is incomplex, of whom no affirmation can be made. The more He is known, the more He becomes unknowable.

"Mensch, Gott gedenket nichts. Ja, wär'n in Ihm gedanken,  
So könnt Er hin und her, welch's Ihm nicht zusteht, wanken"  
(V, 173).<sup>34</sup>

"Wir beten: es gescheh, mein Herr und Gott, dein Wille;  
Und sieh, Er hat nicht Will'; Er ist ein ew'ge Stille" (I, 294).<sup>35</sup>

"Gott ist ein lauter Nichts; Ihn rührt kein Nun noch Hier.  
Je mehr du nach Ihm greifst, je mehr entwird Er dir" (I, 25).<sup>36</sup>

Silesius, however, is saved from the abyss of Quietism, the reducing of God to an unintelligible  $x$ , by his ebullient insistence upon the glories of God—His bountifulness, long-suffering, grace, love, will. These he persists in rejoicing in, regardless of the exigencies of thought which would forbid them. He is convinced that though the clouds of dialectic and the darkness of infinity are

<sup>32</sup> "Apart from me, I know God cannot live a minute.  
Should I leave life, He too could not continue in it."

<sup>33</sup> "God without me cannot create a worm. If I  
Hold not with Him, it and creation's self would die."

<sup>34</sup> "God thinks not. Had He thoughts, they must go here and yonder.  
But it consists not with His changelessness to wander."

<sup>35</sup> "'Thy will be done, O Lord my God!' we pray not well.  
He has no will, but in eternal calm must dwell."

<sup>36</sup> "God is a simple Naught; He has nor Here nor Now.  
The more thou searchest Him the less attainest thou."

round about God, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. This conviction the Cherubinischer Wandersmann carries with him in all his travels.

Like all the Mystics, Silesius holds that the knowledge of God comes not through the processes of the intellect but through intuitive perception; it is a vision, not a conclusion. He echoes the Apostle's declaration, "Knowledge puffeth up, but love upbuildeth."

"Viel wissen blühet auf. Dem Geb' ich Lob und Preis,  
Der den Gekreuzigten in seine Seele weiss" (V, 84).<sup>37</sup>

"Der nächste Weg zu Gott ist durch die Liebe Thür.  
Der Weg der Wissenschaft bringt dich gar langsam flür"  
(V, 320).<sup>38</sup>

"Halt an, mein Augustin; eh' du wirst Gott ergründen,  
Wird man das ganze Meer in einem Grüblein finden" (IV, 22).<sup>39</sup>

Of the path which leads to the knowledge of God he says with Isaiah: "A highway shall be there, even a way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. The wayfaring men though fools shall not err therein."

I have accused Scheffler of stumbling at times into felicity of expression or thought or even into beauty. Perhaps passages like these may justify the accusation:

"Stirb, ehe du noch stirbst, damit du nicht darfst sterben  
Wann du nun sterben sollst; sonst müchtest du verderben"  
(IV, 77).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> "Much knowledge puffs one up. Him rather I extol  
Who knows the Crucified abiding in his soul."

<sup>38</sup> "The nearest way that leads to God is through love's gate.  
Who takes the way of knowledge, comes by far too late."

<sup>39</sup> "Stay, Augustine; ere thou reducest God to rule,  
A man will find the whole of ocean in a pool."

<sup>40</sup> "Die now before thou diest, that thou mayst not die  
When thou shalt die; else shalt thou die eternally."



"Ein Kind, das auf der Welt nur eine Stunde bleibt,  
Das wird so alt als man Mathusalem beschreibt" (II, 168).<sup>41</sup>

"In Gott ist alles Gott; ein einziges Würmelein  
Das ist in Gott so viel als tausend Gotte seyn" (II, 243).<sup>42</sup>

"Die Seele die nichts sucht als eins mit Gott zu seyn,  
Die lebt in steter Ruh', und hat doch steter Pein" (VI, 176).<sup>43</sup>

"Gott ist nicht alles nah. Die Jungfrau und das Kind,  
Die Zwei die sind's allein, die Gott's Gespielen sind" (I, 296).<sup>44</sup>

"Die Ros' ist ohn Warum; sie blühet, weil sie blühet.  
Sie acht't nicht ihrer selbst, fragt nicht, ob man sie siehet"  
(I, 289).<sup>45</sup>

"Mensch, suchst du Gott um Ruh', so ist dir noch nicht recht.  
Du suchest dich, nicht Ihn; bist noch nicht Kind, nur Knecht"  
(I, 58).<sup>46</sup>

"Du klagst, die Creatur'n die bringen dich in Pein;  
Wie? müssen sie doch mir ein Weg zu Gotte seyn" (II, 114).<sup>47</sup>

This last couplet proclaims Silesius no ascetic, and anticipates the exhortation of Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra:

"All good things  
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now than flesh helps soul."

The Bible begins with a transcendent God, the world and all things therein made by a Creator outside it.

<sup>41</sup> "A child who in the world lives but an hour, he  
Is old as e'er Methuselah was said to be."

<sup>42</sup> "What is of God is God. A thousand Gods, I say,  
Might be; and yet a worm is God as much as they."

<sup>43</sup> "The soul that only seeks oneness with God to attain  
Lives in perpetual peace, and has perpetual pain."

<sup>44</sup> "Two there are close to God—not all to Him are near—  
The maiden and the child—these are God's playmates dear."

<sup>45</sup> "The rose is without 'Why?' It blows because it blows.  
It cares not for itself, nor if seen even knows."

<sup>46</sup> "Seekest thou God for rest, thou hast thyself beguiled.  
Thou seek'st thyself, not God; a servant, not a child."

<sup>47</sup> "The creatures, so laments thou, lead thy soul astray.  
Nay, let them rather be for thee to God a way."

The Bible ends — if the Fourth Gospel is the book latest in date — with an immanent God, one who mingles Himself with the winds that blow as they list and with the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart. These two streams of thought have engaged the attention not only of Christian thinkers but those of every place and time. How the two sides were to be combined was a problem which was especially urgent for the Christian Church in the second, third, and fourth centuries. How could the chasm between finite man and infinite God be crossed? how had it been crossed in the work of creation? how were spirit and matter related? how did evil enter the world, and what was evil? Almost all early thinkers were driven by these questions into some form of dualism. There were, they must believe, two Powers in conflict. Since spirit was the higher, matter was evil; it was the work of an inferior god. The material, the natural, was therefore to be fought against; the spiritual man could have nothing to do with it. Indeed, in so far as he was truly spiritual, he was already freed from and above it. This fundamental assumption of the essentially evil nature of matter is exactly contrary to that conclusion to which science now seems tending — that matter is a form of mind. Modern thought seems justifying us in saying that as God has only His own substance out of which to create, He is forever forming the world by an act of transubstantiation, and saying, "Take, eat; this is my body." But Hebrew religion, in its moments of clearest insight, set itself against dualism. The creation, it declared, was not the work of an inferior deity or deities, but both worlds, those of spirit and matter, were called into being by one and the same infinite God. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The Prophet of the Exile was so daring that he did not hesitate to declare Jahveh to be the author of evil itself:

"I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things."<sup>48</sup>

Of course this problem laid its heaviest grasp upon the early Christians in relation to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Starting from the same ground — the essentially evil nature of matter — two opposite schools of thought arose. The one — that of Cerinthus — held that Jesus, as the true son of Joseph and Mary, was, like his fellow-men, tainted with sin, though more righteous than others. The divine Logos was at his baptism joined with him; and these two continued together in the human body of Jesus, until at his death he cast off his flesh and became pure spirit. Dualism was thus seated in the very person of Christ. The other school, that of the Docetists, denied altogether the fleshly, that is evil, nature of Jesus, and maintained that he was human in appearance only, having no real human nature but a wholly spiritual one. This too established a dualism in Christ, through the failure of the different elements in him to constitute a unity. Round this problem, thus insoluble — to keep Jesus in touch with humanity, to assert his freedom from the taint of sin, and to proclaim at the same time the essential distinction between human and divine, and the inherent evil of the human — over and about this the currents of thought flowed for centuries hopelessly. Ideas, speculations, fancies, from sources Christian, Jewish, Oriental, classical, magical, all combined in the many and strange systems which came to be known as Gnosticism. Dualism stamped itself deep even upon orthodox Christianity, and it came to be taken for granted that there was a necessary opposition between faith and reason, grace and nature, supernatural and natural, the priest and the man, the Church and the world.

Such opinions could not remain speculative only. They involved a denial of that which to the author of

<sup>48</sup> Isa. 45 7.

the Johannine Epistles was life's most precious possession — the conviction that Jesus was the authentic revelation of the infinite God. For this denial gave birth to a disbelief in any ultimate standard, which resulted in antinomianism and immorality, and to a disregard of the corporate nature of religion, which then became gross selfishness. One who can see Jesus Christ, and yet not welcome in him the ideal of God and man, can do so, in this author's view, only by denying his own moral perceptions. And so he bursts out into the exclamation which is the central thought of all his Epistles, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ!"<sup>49</sup>

As religion has become more profound it has sternly demanded the unity of God. It will not allow many gods; there can be but one. But this just insistence upon monotheism has often failed to learn an important lesson from polytheism — the lesson of the value of complexity. To the polytheist the multifarious agencies of the world, though not all from the same source, are yet all divine. He sees "an earth crammed with heaven and every common bush afire with God." The monotheist must draw a line between what he considers is proper to God and what is not; and the result is, on one side a God all of a kind, and on the other side a large part of the world without a God in it. Moreover, the more completely he raises God above the world, the more he removes Him from apprehension. Anything in Him which humanity could touch would be a derogation to His uniqueness, and He therefore becomes not only solitary but unknowable, the  $x$  of a cosmic algebra. But monotheism may be saved from atheism by taking a hint from its sister polytheism and carrying it further. If the human mind demands both complexity and unity in God, then unity must itself be complex. And the moment the idea is apprehended, the mind exclaims in

<sup>49</sup> 1 John 2 22.



amazement at its own dulness, "Why, of course!" And then the instances come crowding in. Every government — so the modern world is perceiving — must include federated States; every complete family, both parents and children; every living body, nerves and muscles; every machine, wheels and shafts. Every union which is not such by cohesion only, must be organic, its parts finding the ground of their being in the whole and the whole present in every part. Then, says the mind, jumping from earth to heaven, the infinite must include the finite; then they are not diverse, the finite the opposite of the infinite. Then the finite belongs of necessity to the infinite, and the infinite must have it not out of kindness to the finite but in the interest of its own infinity. But if the finite is that which is limited, does not this establish limitation in the very bosom of the infinite? Yes, and because it is established there, it is no bar to infinity. For then infinity exhibits itself not as the unlimited but as the self-limited. The finite then becomes that which is limited from without itself and the infinite that which is limited from within itself; and at once the antagonisms of dualism and Angelus Silesius's paradox of the necessity of man to God disappear. God cannot exist without me any more than I can without God.

Dualism's method of uniting the human and the divine is quantitative. A certain amount of the human in one side of the scales displaces just so much of the divine on the other side. This is commercialism in a region in which commercialism is impossible. But the union between God and man must rather be qualitative. If we were to choose a word for the method, it would perhaps be "interpenetration." And in order to discover what that is we should turn to the instances of it by which we are surrounded. The thought of one mind flows into another not by displacing an equivalent bulk

there but by penetrating it, so that it becomes interwoven with the mind invaded while at the same time it belongs as fully as ever to the original owner. So the whole range of the personality of one passes into, fills, and becomes part of the personality of another.

“So close we dwelt, we hardly stood apart.  
Before one spoke, subtly the other heard,  
As hand serves hand without the need of word  
In quick response, as pulse keeps touch with heart.”

To exhibit such union the best magnifying glass is marriage.

“For we have grown as part to part,  
One filling out the other’s being;  
Implying each, like blood and heart;  
In each implied, like eyes and seeing.

“Such closest union has amazed  
Our happy souls, its depths unfolding;  
And through it, awe-struck, we have gazed,  
God and His glory thus beholding.”

We find it expressed more accurately and profoundly in Shakespeare’s *Phœnix and Turtle*:

“So they loved, as love in twain  
Had the essence but in one;  
Two distincts, division none;  
Number there in love was slain.

“Property was thus appalled,  
That the self was not the same;  
Single nature’s double name  
Neither two nor one was called.

“Reason, in itself confounded,  
Saw division grow together;  
To themselves yet either-neither,  
Simple were so well compounded

"That it cried, 'How true a twain  
Seemeth this concordant one!'  
Love hath reason, reason none,  
If what parts can so remain."

It was such a union that Jesus desired his disciples might have with him: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us. The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. All mine are Thine, and Thine are mine."<sup>50</sup>

The line between different stages of being is everywhere difficult, sometimes impossible, to draw. Just where is this dividing line between the plant and the animal? between the animal and the human being? between a man and his friend? between the soul and God? Such lines are like the geographer's parallels and meridians, which must be imagined for the convenience of the student but which have no real existence. Long before this abolition of distinctions in kind was pointed out St. Paul saw and rejoiced in its higher developments. "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." It was to his mind the glory of the situation that there is a line running straight without break from every human soul through Christ to God. Man's humanity shades into the humanity of Jesus, and Jesus' humanity shades into his divinity, and his divinity shades into the divinity of the Godhead. This constitutes a bond between God and man, and gives each a need of and an essential hold on the other. The Bible

<sup>50</sup> St. John 17 21 f. I cannot refrain from calling attention to the misuse of this passage, according to which Jesus is supposed to be setting forth the importance of corporate unity, as it is called, of having but one ecclesiastical institution. But the union he desired with his disciples was to be like that between him and his Father, which was certainly not institutional. His words here refer to a union the very opposite of that contemplated by those who use them as an authorization of their demand for church-uniformity.

is full of the thought that God needs man's aid in redeeming the world, a real need, the withholding of which will retard the redemptive process. Meroz is cursed because it came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty. And it was this interwovenness of God and man which formed the ground of Jesus' argument for immortality. It is sometimes regarded as a mere quibble that he should put forth the statement, "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob," as proof that these persons were still living.<sup>51</sup> But the argument is sound. If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were united to God while on earth, they came to form part of His being; and if once they became a part of Him, they must be ever a part, unless they have ceased to be such as in character they were. For God cannot change, and unless they did, they are still component and therefore living in Him; for God is not the God of the dead but of the living. Angelus Silesius likens the presence of God in all that is His to the presence of the number one in all the other numbers:

"Gleichwie die Einheit ist in einer jeden Zahl,  
So ist auch Gott der Ein' in Dingen überall" (V, 3).<sup>52</sup>

And this insistence of the One in demanding its implications is the assurance of the permanence of the parts and therefore of personal immortality.

"This, this we know;  
For one must have its two,  
If two are one — foreseeing,  
Where thought can reach  
Each soul will carry each  
Stamped in its inmost being.

<sup>51</sup> St. Matt. 22 32.

<sup>52</sup> "As numbers great or small the number One imply,  
So too is God the One in all things low or high."



"For one means two, and two means four,  
And four means fifty million more;  
And fifty million stopped the sun  
Because they missed one little one.

"God cannot rest in His eternal bliss  
Without each atom which was ever His.  
If thou in me and I in thee have grown  
And both in God, then all we three are one."

Many of the followers of Mysticism have found peace in the great surrender it requires. When the tired mind gives up its problems, when the proud will bows itself, when the fierce passions cease their clamorous demands, then the soul feels itself lying without struggle and at rest in the arms of the infinite. Such a rest is indeed restful if it is temporary and partial. If it is thoroughgoing, it is death; for it is the annihilation of personality, and therefore a diminution of the glory of God. The Seer of the Apocalypse in his celestial vision once saw the voice of the place hushed; there was silence in heaven. But it was but for half an hour, and then the great chorus of praise and of judgment was resumed by angels and men.<sup>53</sup> If the doctrine of the complex infinite is true, God's glory consists not in the absence of other personalities but in their most numerous and fullest development. Each is not only an advertisement but an embodiment of Him. Let a man claim all knowledge as his right; let him sharpen his will till it is keen and firm; let him covet earnestly the best gifts; let him aim high—it cannot be too high. It is thus that he will be "for the Master's uses meet," rather than by being "a broken and empty vessel." The barren lifelessness of Mysticism is not the peace of heaven.

Many of the most noted Mystics have freed themselves from the deadening effect of its negations, because to them

<sup>53</sup> Rev. 8 2.

these were only parts of a higher affirmation, and it has been the glory of the affirmation in which they have rejoiced. To abstain from any assertion about God because of a narrow conception of personality is one thing; to abstain, blinded with seeing, because He is so gloriously beyond all description is another. To the higher Mystics therefore Mysticism has brought a wealth which persons of their temperament could probably have gained in no other way. Vistas open to them and far voices call. But the form of Mysticism which has leavened popular religious thought — and this leaven is extensive — is pernicious through the establishment of a false ideal — the suppression of personality as the means of approach to God. It is this which is largely responsible for that erroneous supposition of those who know religion but little, that it is feeble, joyless, measured by its abstentions, lacking in virility and power. Such a conception paralyzes effort; it does not hold up amplitude of life as the Christian's aim and right; it embalms a dead past. It refuses to follow the Psalmist when he declares, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." Such souls, though starting with a vision of the glories of God, through a mistaken response to it become narrower and feebler; like the rivers which instead of growing fuller and richer as they roll, become more and more shallow, until at last they are dried up and lost in barren wastes of sand.

I said that Silesius holds that knowledge of God comes not through the processes of the intellect but through intuitive perception. This is a fundamental position of the Mystics, so fundamental that to many it seems almost their sole distinguishing characteristic. The knowledge of God is to them not understanding but vision, and therefore certainty. Ask them how they are sure of that "therefore," and they would perhaps ask in reply how you know that two and two are four. It is because it is;

and this conviction flashes upon them with a clearness and intensity which are their own assurance. Such evidence can of course be valid for themselves alone. The "Why?" which would be the bridge between them and others they cannot build. So though the sight of their confident faith may be impressive to a beholder, the grounds of it he must investigate for himself, for they cannot impart them. Yet this is not denying that these grounds may have validity for them. For the deepest intercourse between mind and mind is not limited by the senses but far transcends word or sight. The communications of the spirit are like the wind, of which "thou canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." Samuel Butler says of excogitation: "Great thoughts are not to be caught in this way. They must present themselves for capture of their own free will, or be taken with a little coyness only."<sup>54</sup> All the processes of life at their fullest must be unconscious; otherwise, like manners, they become vulgar. But it must be an unconsciousness which is positive, not negative; that is, which has passed through the stage of consciousness and which may, if need be, revert to it at any moment and feel its intellectual base. The skilled pianist in the midst of his sonata does not think of notes or fingers; but if a hitch occurs, he can stop and adjust the one to the other. Wealth is measured by the things one takes as matters of course. To the poor man having a dinner is a ground for congratulation; the rich man accepts it as part of the un-thought-about order of things. If one is apprehensive how this or that will affect his friend, the friendship has not reached its height. "He that feareth is not made perfect in love." Consciousness is a necessary step to the fullest development, but it is not itself the highest step.

Science is telling us today of a means of intercourse, of which, while she confesses her ignorance what it is, she

<sup>54</sup> God the Known and God the Unknown; Chap. IV, II.

yet seems to have confidence that it is. This power of second sight, thought-transference, telepathy, which gives the key to faith-healing and many other apparent miracles, when it comes to our fuller knowledge will undoubtedly explain much of that immediate intercourse between minds which now seems mysterious or often merely imaginary. But if it is possible for thought to pass from one mind to another by intuitive perception, there is surely no field fitter for its exercise than between the soul and God. Ask a soul so engaged, "How do you know that it is God at the other end of the telephone and not your own fancies merely?" and he would probably smile and turn away repeating his steadfast conviction, "I knew a man caught up to the third heaven, whether in the body I cannot tell or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth. But he heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for man to utter."<sup>55</sup> All we can say of these mystic states is that they may rightfully carry authority for those who have them; that they can have no authority for others; but that to grant their authority for any one is to overthrow the claim of the intellectual powers to be the sole ground of authority. The Mystic's claim to immediacy in the perception of truth may point the way to a larger world than that dominated by the rational understanding, a world whose ways of intercourse are as much swifter than the ordinary processes of thought as wireless telegraphy is swifter than foot-messengers, a world in which St. John's sublime conjunction "for" is justified: "We shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as He is."

Spinoza was said to be a God-intoxicated man. Angelus Silesius was a man who panted to lose himself in God. But it must surely be that He who wills not that one of His little ones should perish, would not permit such suicide to be successful, but that one who thus aimed to

<sup>55</sup> 2 Cor. 12 2.



lose his life for God's sake would find it. The epitaph which he wrote "On an Upright Man" may well be his own:

"Hier ist ein Mann gelegt, der stets im Durste lebte,  
Und nach Gerechtigkeit bey Tag und Nachte strebte,  
Und nie gesättigt ward. Nun ist ihm allbereit  
Sein Durst gestillt mit Gott der süssen Ewigkeit" (III, 49).

"Here lies a man who lived in thirst alway,  
Who strove for righteousness by night and day,  
And ne'er was satisfied. But, thirstless, he  
Now dwells with God in sweet eternity."

Angelus Silesius sought God; and, as always, more abundantly than he had dreamed God met him. Like a river which, hemmed in on this side and on that, still struggles on, ever aiming at the sea; when before it reaches the shore, the great tide rushes up, meets it, enfolds it, and sweeps it into the mighty depths in which it finds the glad fulfilment of its aim.

## BOOK REVIEWS

תולדות העיקרים בישראל THE HISTORY OF DOGMAS IN ISRAEL.  
 Prof. DAVID NEUMARK, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
 Vol. I. Odessa. 1913. Pp. xvi-184.

This is the first volume of a history of dogmas in Judaism by one of the foremost Jewish scholars of the present day. A subsequent volume is to complete the history. As to how the history of a dogma should be presented there is of course room for difference of opinion. It is possible to trace the development of a particular doctrine or group of doctrines through a given period, or it is possible to give in more systematic form the teaching of the leaders of Jewish thought in their chronological order; and various combinations of both methods are possible. Dr. Neumark chooses the latter, which, outside of Biblical times, tends to concentrate attention on the particular teacher, and leaves a student uncertain how far the dogma which he represents is only an individual's opinion; but it has no doubt its special advantages, and the student who wishes to take his history in this form will find Dr. Neumark an excellently equipped and thoroughly sympathetic guide.

The study of Jewish dogmas was for a long time neglected. In the words of the late Dr. Schechter, the dogmas of Judaism "were either overlooked or explained away, so as to make them harmonize with the great dogma of dogmalessness" (*Stud. in Jud.* I, 148). It was Moses Mendelssohn's assertion (in his *Jerusalem*) that Judaism has no dogmas, which subsequently provoked considerable discussion. Abraham Geiger and Samuel Holdheim held that there are dogmas in Judaism but no creed as a condition of salvation, while some of their contemporaries were of the opinion that a definite formulation of principles is incompatible with Judaism. Despite the fact that many scholars have since treated this subject quite extensively, it remains to this day an unsettled point of debate.

Dr. Neumark bears the distinction of having produced the first exhaustive study of the subject that has ever been brought out, and as such it is notable. This book, which at the present time is recognized as a standard work abroad, is, I fear, owing to its being written in Modern Hebrew, not sufficiently known in this country. It will

therefore not be out of place to give here a brief outline of this invaluable work.

The method pursued by the author is highly commendable. In the introductory chapters he explains the technical use of the word *יִקָּר* in Jewish literature, which became the specific term for the fundamental principle of dogma in Rabbinic literature and in the works of the mediæval Jewish philosophers. In proving that Judaism has dogmas, Professor Neumark asserts that their history must be divided into four periods: (1) The Period of the Books of the Covenant, i.e. from Moses to Ezra; (2) The Period of the Men of the Great Synagogue, i.e. from Ezra to the Close of the Canon; (3) The Period of the Mishnah; and (4) The Period of Literary Discussion, i.e. from the Close of the Mishnah to the Present Time. The present volume is devoted to the first two periods. Dr. Neumark then proceeds by dividing the Jewish dogmas into various classes. He finds in Judaism Essential and Historical dogmas. The first class consists of (a) The Existence of God, as eternal, spiritual, and unique; (b) Prophecy; (c) Man's Free Will; (d) Retribution. To these four dogmas, which were accepted in Judaism at a very early stage, are to be added two others: (e) The existence of Angels, as intermediary between God and the Universe — a dogma found in the first Book of the Covenant but rejected by the second and practically ignored in all the later authoritative documents in Judaism; (f) Creation, a dogma not found in the first two Books of the Covenant, being first indicated in the third Book of the Covenant. Professor Neumark therefore distinguishes this dogma by the particular designation Essential-Historical dogma. The historical dogmas are (a) Resurrection of the Dead; (b) The World-Hereafter, in the sense of *spiritual retribution* of the soul while being outside of the body; (c) The coming of the Messiah; (d) Torah from Heaven (*תורה מן השמים*); and (e) Oral Tradition (*תורה שבעל פה*).

It is gratifying to see that Dr. Neumark did not hesitate to adopt the results of modern Biblical criticism, building his own structure thereon. With the Bible critics he finds in the Pentateuch three covenants separated from each other in time and in doctrine. The first is that of Sinai, known as the Book of the Covenant; the second is the Deuteronomic covenant; and the third is that of Ezra, which combined the so-called Priestly Code with the Code of Holiness. What is novel in Dr. Neumark is the thought that these three covenants are not merely literary productions, which in the course of time became authoritative bodies in Judaism, and that each succeeding covenant was meant to invalidate its predecessor and take its

place, but rather that every code was a dogmatic document, and had its *raison d'être* in that it was meant to protest against certain objectionable beliefs which were sanctioned by the previously existing covenant and were taking a dangerous turn in the minds of the people. Thus the Deuteronomic covenant, being the work of the school of Jeremiah, was a protest against the belief in angels, sanctioned in the Sinaitic covenant but considered dangerous to the belief in the Unity of God by Jeremiah and his followers. The Ezra covenant was in the nature of a compromise between the school of Ezekiel, who believed in angels, and that of Jeremiah, who did not. The compromise was found in the new doctrine of creation. God created everything, the angels also. Before Jeremiah the prophets knew nothing of God as the creator of the Universe. They knew Him only as the moral force in the world, as the judge of human conduct. His unity was thus endangered by a belief in angels. With the dogma of creation introduced by Jeremiah the angel doctrine lost much of its sting, and yet Ezra, who came from the school of Jeremiah, was not in favor of angels, and there are only slight traces of it in the third covenant. All this is very ingenious indeed, and Dr. Neumark is admirably skillful in giving his theory plausibility and a measure of evidence, but it would be too much to say that one is convinced. In addition to these three Biblical covenants there are two post-Biblical documents of a dogmatic character consisting of (a) the form of prayers, benedictions, and public readings instituted by the Men of the Great Synagogue; and (b) the Mishnah. The first of these was meant to emphasize and make familiar the doctrines of the Biblical covenants, and served also as a receptacle for any new belief in the resurrection of the soul. The second document was the last authoritative one in Judaism, and owes its special form to the conditions of its authors' struggle with the new religion of Christianity. As the professors of the new religion had the Bible before them and in it they found support for Christianity, the Mishnah lays stress on tradition as a source of authority. The opposition of the Pauline school of Christianity to the ceremonial law was met by writing down a code developing the ceremonial law in all its details. Besides, it emphasized the theological dogmas in which Judaism differed from Christianity. Thus there is no mention of angels in the Mishnah, the Unity of God is emphasized, and stress is laid on freedom of the will and retribution. The literature after the Mishnah is merely expository and controversial.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Neumark, who is a member of the faculty of the Hebrew Union College — an institution for the



training of Reform rabbis — denies any dogmatic significance to the Rabbinic belief in the Election of Israel, which is so frequently exaggerated by the Reform movement in Judaism. It must be remembered, however, that though Maimonides did not include it in his Thirteen Articles of Faith, the notion of the Election of Israel always maintained in Jewish consciousness the character of almost an unformulated dogma (see Weiss, *דברי*, III, 301; Kaufmann, *JQR*, II, 424; and Schechter, *Aspects of Rabb. Theol.*, p. 57). Indeed Neumark himself mentions the fact that Judah Halevi regarded it almost as the most important yet unformulated dogma *כמעט בבחינת היקף ביותר נכבד*.

The religious significance of the Universalism of the Prophets of Judah and Israel is excellently treated by the author, who correctly asserts that the idea of universalism always formed an important link in the teachings of Judaism. It finds its expression in diverse ways in the literature of the Jews in all ages, but cannot be considered as absolutely essential to the teachings of Judaism. Dr. Neumark takes into consideration the chief incidents and turning points in the national history of the ancient Hebrews in their relation to the development of religious ideas, and the writings of the prophets naturally assume for him a new importance. They do not record a particular series of historical events; they embody the religious thoughts of successive generations.

In a very fine manner Dr. Neumark differentiates the philosophic conception of the world from the prophetic conception. The philosophic conception is based upon some outer senses, while the prophetic conception emanates from the soul to life. The ethical conception of the world is the natural result of this relation, and he justly asserts that as long as this ethical conception is not based upon a cosmological foundation, so long will it lack substantiality. It was this task that Judaism had to take up. Jeremiah was the first one to develop this cosmological view. He formulated the idea of an ethical God who is also the creator of the universe.

In the chapters devoted to the Immortality of the Soul and the question of Sheol, the author endeavors to explain the reason why the Old Testament has no reference to Immortality. He believes that the founders of Judaism surely had a certain definite conception of the Immortality of the Soul, since they seriously pondered on the significance of the soul and its place in the universe. It would be altogether wrong to assume that such men regarded the soul as a matter of passing nature. They believed that the soul of the individual is rooted within the soul of the multitude and that the immor-

tality of the soul of the individual is entirely connected with the eternity of the soul of the multitude. The idea of immortality must have been present in the minds of some of the founders of Judaism. The belief in a life after death was connected with the belief of Sheol, a belief which the Israelites commonly shared with the most primitive peoples. It is, however, certain that even in the Biblical age Sheol did not represent, for the Hebrew mind at least, all the possibilities of life after death. For some of the Psalmists Sheol was a state from which it is possible to be saved. The doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul gradually became an integral part of the Jewish Creed.

The concluding chapters of the volume deal at length with the problem of the Resurrection of the Body and its place in Jewish literature and liturgy. Interesting is Dr. Neumark's treatment of the controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees concerning the doctrine of Resurrection.

The book is in style and form a refreshing contrast to Dr. Neumark's other works. His point of view, spirit, and method of treatment are historical, showing throughout independence of judgment, and at many points he does not hesitate to depart from prevailing views. The book is the product of much labor on the part of the author and will repay careful study, and those who are interested in the subject will read it with pleasure and profit. Dr. Neumark's work fills a long-felt want, and we only regret that owing to the present war the publication of the second volume is unavoidably delayed.

JOSHUA BLOCH.

LAKE CHARLES, LA.

ARCHÆOLOGY AND THE BIBLE. GEORGE A. BARTON, Ph.D., LL.D. American Sunday School Union. Philadelphia. 1916. Pp. xiii, 461. \$2.00.

Professor Barton's beautiful book, of 460 odd pages of matter, 111 plates, and 9 maps, was prepared at the request of the Board of Managers of the American Sunday School Union primarily to meet the needs of Sunday-school teachers and scholars. In any criticism of the book that fact must be kept in mind, for the method of presentation chosen was one calculated to avoid arousing the dogmatic prejudice which would almost inevitably follow the introduction of questions as to the historical value of some of the Old Testament material.

The book for the most part fulfils the purpose for which it was written, namely, to form such a collection of the material and so to

present it that "one may not only have the wealth of illustration for Biblical study that exploration has produced, but also that he may possess an outline of the history of exploration and of the countries sufficient to enable him to place each item in its proper perspective." It is today undoubtedly the best book available to put into the hands of ministers and Sunday-school workers, and even more serious students will rejoice in the possession of so complete an introduction to the archæological matter bearing on the Bible.

In Part I the Bible Lands are considered. Egypt, Babylonia-Assyria, and the Hittites are taken up in turn, the land, the preservation of its antiquities, their recovery and decipherment, leading up in each case to an outline history of each of these peoples. Two chapters are devoted to Palestine, its exploration and archæological history, while the cities of Palestine, its roads and agriculture, pottery, utensils and personal ornaments, and measures, weights, and money occupy five more. The high-places and temples and the tombs of the land are next taken up, and this part of the book ends with chapters on Jerusalem, the Decapolis, and Athens, Corinth, and the Churches of Asia. In Part II the external sources are given at considerable length, the order following that of the Biblical books which they illustrate.

From this outline of Dr. Barton's book its excellences at once appear, and also its one serious limitation. Although the archæological material he deals with is largely literary-historical in character as distinguished from archæological artifacts, Dr. Barton has not given a history of the ancient Orient in the light of archæology and the Bible, but a series of monographs or prolegomena to such a history. The method adopted is topical at the expense of one strictly historical. It would have been an invaluable aid to the reader if all the data of archæology and of the Bible here adduced had been assigned to their proper place chronologically, so that he could have been enabled to see at a glance all that is known about any given period of the history. Perhaps Professor Barton will give us such a book later on.

MAX KELLNER.

THE EPISCOPAL THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL,  
CAMBRIDGE.

THE VOCABULARY OF THE GREEK TESTAMENT. Illustrated from the Papyri and other Non-Literary Sources. JAMES HOPE MOULTON, D.D., and GEORGE MILLIGAN, D.D. Parts I, II. 1914, 1915. Hodder & Stoughton. Pp. 100. 6s.

The two parts of this work which have been published, carrying us through the letter  $\delta$  and representing one-third of the whole work, are sufficient to indicate the value and interest of the undertaking. It is not merely a lexicon or a dictionary, nor is it a concordance of New Testament words in the papyri. It is an alphabetically arranged series of "observations" on the N. T. from the non-literary Greek, and includes some grammatical and orthographic information as well as exegetical material. It is an expansion of such pioneer work as Deissmann's *Bible Studies* in matters of vocabulary, of Moulton's and Thackeray's unfinished grammars, and of such use of the papyri as has been employed in Milligan's commentary on Thessalonians and Robinson's on Ephesians.

In addition to the papyri the inscriptions and ostraka of the Hellenistic age, and such writers as Vettius Valens the astrologer, Epictetus, and even the evidence of Modern Greek are used as non-literary sources. Occasional new or neglected parallels from literary sources are also mentioned.

Neither the material nor the view-point of the work is wholly new. The series of articles published for several years in the *Expositor* by the same authors under the title "Lexical Notes from the Papyri" had already indicated the method and value of such study. It shows that the language of the New Testament was originally the language of the people and not either a Jewish Greek or a special "language of the Holy Ghost." It leaves few words to the somewhat imaginary category of "Biblical Greek." Further, it discloses or illustrates or confirms the special nuance of New Testament words, phrases, or idioms. It helps determine the literary standing of various words. Occasionally it gives us actually new meanings.

The form and method of the book are most commendable. It is singularly free from artificial standards. It is almost readable, though of course intended for reference. The parallels are well selected and are given fully enough for the purpose and dated. They are not exhaustive, but the frequency with which a word is used in the vernacular is usually indicated. As the long bibliography shows, the material here brought together is from a very large collection of expensive volumes to which few New Testament scholars have access either in public or private libraries. The large page and the



clear type are admirable. The only errors noticed are apparently merely defects in the plates.

The reviewer of such a volume must specially regret the death in March, 1917, of Professor Moulton, one of its editors. It is, however, a consolation to know that the whole work is well in hand and will be completed, the third part being already in press. Further discoveries and further study will prevent the volume from being final. The whole world would welcome such an independent working over of the same ground as the *Observationes* from the papyri for a new Wetstein which Heinrici and others planned at Leipzig in 1915. But the English work will long remain fundamental as a supplement to the regular lexicon.

HENRY J. CADBURY.

Haverford College.

JOHN HUSS, HIS LIFE, TEACHINGS, AND DEATH, AFTER FIVE HUNDRED YEARS. DAVID S. SCHAFF, D.D. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1915. Pp. xvi, 349. \$2.50.

For the biographer of John Huss there exist few of the "problems" presented by the lives of most great leaders of men. The life of Huss was, in homely phrase, "all of a piece." A competent but not distinguished scholar, a preacher drawing men to him by a direct appeal to the simple and straightforward understanding of common folk, a theologian of no marked originality, but with a consistence and a persistence which his opponents felt as obstinacy, he did his work in the world with dignity and loyalty. When it came to the final test of purchasing his personal safety by the surrender of the royalties he had so far maintained, he made his choice without wavering and sealed his decision by the supreme sacrifice of his life.

This judgment of Huss's personality is the keynote of Dr. Schaff's treatment of the man and his work before us. In the main it is a plain recital of the several stages of the Reformer's development and his varied activities. Based upon careful and long-continued research and made vivid by well-chosen allusions to personal visits to the scenes of action, the narrative carries us along easily and with a sense of completeness to the tragic close.

Problems there are, and these Dr. Schaff discusses in sufficient but not wearisome detail. The question of Huss's dependence upon his Bohemian predecessors, and especially upon the English Wycliffe, has been forced upon the student by the effort of Germans, notably J. Loserth, to minimize the Bohemian's originality, and the "deadly

parallel column" has been effectively used to prove his almost entire indebtedness to Wycliffe for his doctrinal divergences from the tradition of the Church. Dr. Schaff is inclined to go a little farther than we can follow him in accepting this view. He draws a rather sharp line between Huss's moral teaching, which he thinks was his Bohemian heritage, and his constructive thought, which he ascribes mainly to Wycliffe. It is at least permissible to ask whether Huss's thought was not his own, confirmed and strengthened by the more systematic and comprehensive presentation of the same ideas which he found in his English co-worker.

The problem of Huss's relation to the Council of Constance is one rather of the European situation as a whole than of the Council and its victim alone. The Council itself was, in a very literal sense, on trial before the higher tribunal of Christian Europe. It was venturing upon a bolder programme than had ever been undertaken by any similar assembly — if indeed it can be compared with any earlier representation of the Church. Especially in its demands for thorough-going reforms it was exposing itself to the charge of a radical hostility to the existing church system. Above all things, therefore, it was necessary to establish the orthodoxy of the Council in matters of faith, and no better certificate of orthodoxy could be furnished than a unanimous and spectacular condemnation of heresy, witnessed by a brilliant *auto-da-fé*. Dr. Schaff does not, we think, quite sufficiently bring out this fundamental fact. He refers to the persistence of the leading reformers at Constance in their determination to crush their victim, but bases this rather upon their personal convictions than upon a predetermined attitude toward the problems of the Council itself.

His analysis of the vexed question of the imperial safe-conduct is eminently judicial. He marshals the evidence on both sides, and thus gives added force to the opinion that Sigismund, after his first flurry of indignation at what seemed an invasion of his right by the conciliar party, lost interest in Huss and sacrificed him to the greater advantage of his own good standing with the Council. The foul plea that faith need not be kept with heretics was merely a cover for the scandal of his broken word.

We commend this calm and thoughtful survey of the life and work of Huss to the student and the general reader alike as, on the whole, the best available treatment of its subject in English.

EPHRAIM EMERTON.

LA CHIESA E I NUOVI TEMPI. Scritti di GIOVANNI PIOLI, ROMOLO MURRI, GIOVANNI MEILLE, UGO JANNI, MARIO FALCHI, MARIO ROSSI, QUI QUONDAM, ANTONINO DE STEFANO, ALFREDO TAGLIALATELA. Edited by the Baptist Theological School of Rome. 1917. Pp. xxxii, 307. L. 3.50.

There are books the importance of which is not so much in their content as in the mere fact of their publication. The present volume belongs to such a class of books. Under the general title, *The Church and the New Times*, it contains ten chapters on various topics due to nine different writers, and an Introduction by Dr. Whittinghil, President of the Baptist Theological School of Rome. With few exceptions, the authors of the various chapters are former Italian Modernists, some of whom now belong to Protestantism, while others live outside any religious denomination. The attempt of the Italian Protestants to win to their cause the excommunicated Italian Modernists as a whole was a failure, not only because the content and the purpose of Modernism were not converging towards Protestantism either orthodox or liberal, but also on account of the peculiar conditions of Italian Protestantism, which makes no appeal to the Italian religious conscience. Dr. Whittinghil, however, succeeded in making friends with quite a number of them, especially through his monthly Review, *Bilychnis*, which is the only Italian religious review giving hospitality to the Modernist writers, who lack a periodical publication of their own.

The present book is the outcome of the spirit of collaboration which was created by the exchange of ideas established among the ordinary contributors to the same review, and it may be considered as the first open attempt to find a common ground for their religious thought and their religious activity as well. We cannot say, however, that it has been carried on very successfully, although we do not find in this book either any trace of the traditional Baptist theology or a constructive theology on a Modernist line. What we find is but a kind of diluted and elastic theological romanticism, together with an indictment of the Roman Catholic Church, reproducing the main points of accusation familiar to the old Protestant polemicists.

Dr. Whittinghil says in his introduction that "the word 'Church,' as it is used in this volume, regards especially the Roman Catholic Church" (p. xxi); but as a matter of fact the criticism, which is in general directed against the Roman Catholic Church, can be as well applied, and it is frequently applied by the writers themselves, to the various Protestant Churches. For this part the book has

a Modernist rather than a Protestant flavor; but other chapters, and especially those on the social question, on philosophy and theology and on morals, the compilation of which was handed to the Protestant contributors, display that kind of inconsistent eclecticism which is peculiar to the modern Italian Protestants.

The first chapter, under the title "Church and Churches" by G. Pioli, aims to be a comparison of the religious life as it is to be found in Roman Catholicism and in Protestantism, and is to the full advantage of the latter. The main charge brought against the Roman Church is its being a close field, while Protestantism is on the way towards a final religious unity which shall include even the non-Christian religions of the East. "The orthodoxies," he says, "will become the orthodoxy when they shall realize the relativity and symbolism of forms, rites, and canons; and the churches will not become the Church unless they lose themselves in order to find themselves" (p. 53). This phrase is in great favor with the preachers of today; but impressive as it is in its biblical clothing, it is none the less void of content unless it is taken as a total and complete rejection of the fundamental ideas necessarily connected with the kind of institutions that we call Churches. But then, why keep the name, if the thing itself is gone? To have falsified Christianity by putting new wine into old bottles, is a common charge against the Roman Church. Would not this be exactly the same process?

An equally wholesale condemnation of the whole system of the Churches is the conclusion of the second chapter on "Church and State," by the well-known writer, R. Murri. "The distinction between the two institutions," he says, "is substantially formal; but the form in this case is the content itself. Everything is religion and everything is politics; only the point of view is different, the momentum of the spirit which actuates itself" (p. 75). This whole chapter has a rather enigmatic form; but if these words have any meaning, they cannot be interpreted but as a flat denial of the right of all the Churches to be considered as *personæ* in the *πόλις*.

The third chapter on "The Church and the Social Question," by G. Meille, deals primarily with the economic side of the problem and makes also some astonishing revelations. It is said, for instance, that Pope Leo XIII betrayed the true interests of the working classes in his encyclicals on the social question, because "he understood that his adhesion to the doctrines with socialistic flavor of some Catholic bishops, would have alienated from him the sympathies of the European governments." And "that," he concludes,



"is a clear demonstration that to socialize the Roman Church, the first condition is to transform its organization, which is essentially political, into an organization essentially religious" (p. 86); as if Pope Leo was unaware that the fundamental principles of Socialism are antithetical to Catholic theology and cannot be reconciled to it, or as if although being fully aware of such an opposition he could overlook it and do as he pleased. No less sweeping is the final identification assumed by the author of "Church, Religion, and Social Service," as if they were mere names of the same thing.

In the following chapter U. Janni rejects the solutions of the problem of religious knowledge offered by the intellectualistic as well as by the anti-intellectualistic philosophies. According to him, religious knowledge "finds its origin in the revealing act of the Holy Ghost, which brings Christ and with Christ God Himself to dwell in us. The mystic apprehension of the divine is given us by the reaction of the soul to this revealing act of the Holy Ghost" (pp. 129-130). This reaction is the work of the whole man, reason and will, working together and not as distinct energies. As for the object of this knowledge, it is "the idea that the absolute we are dependent upon is neither the absolute impersonal, nor the divine immanent in the soul, but the living personal God, who transcends the human soul and makes Himself felt in this very transcendency, although we do not understand how such a thing happens" (p. 132). The starting point here being a revelation of the Holy Ghost to individual souls, no wonder that in such a knowledge there is no room for the understanding. *Credo ut intelligam*. Is that Protestant or is it Modernist? We find also that the author is too optimistic in his idea of life in the early Church, when he invokes today that liberty of theological speculation "which was to be found in the Church of the early centuries."

Less interesting is the chapter on "Church and Science" by M. Falchi, and the following two on "Church and Criticism" by M. Rossi and Qui Quondam. They give a rapid outline of the well-known struggle between positive science and theology and of the history of biblical criticism. The authors of those chapters do not fail to remark that if Catholicism was guilty against science, Protestantism was not wholly innocent; but in some historical details they exaggerate the Catholic guilt while they soften the guilt of the Protestants.

More interesting and as a whole well outlined is De Stefano's chapter on "Church and Heresy," although there is a kind of overestimation of the progressive function of heresy, and an under-

estimation of the real value of the coercive function of orthodoxy, which helps a great deal in eliminating all the trash inseparable from all heretical movements, while what is vital in them is really beyond the reach of the reactionary power. We are afraid that in his synthetical judgment the author looked at the matter more "*sub specie æternitatis*" than with his usual historical accuracy.

The last chapter, by Rev. A. Tagliatela, deals with "Church and Morals." Here we have the usual indictment of Casuistry and Probabilism as representative of all Catholic ethics, and the no less usual quotation of some words of Harnack, who speaks of "the comprehensive ethical books of the Jesuits" as "*monstra* of abomination," etc.; words which are the *locus communis* of all the anti-Catholic polemics against confession and against the Jesuits. But if it was quite a blunder for Harnack to consider the Jesuit casuistry as the ethical code of Catholicism, there is no reason why his words must be reverently repeated like a biblical quotation by Rev. A. Tagliatela, who seems to know something about Casuistry. No less inexact is his assumption that the practice of confession leads *necessarily* the Catholic soul to lose the capacity of passing judgment upon itself. On the contrary, the practice of confession, as it is understood by the Church, is directed exactly to the development of such a capacity to its utmost efficiency. Confession calls for frequent and careful examinations of conscience, which are but informal auto-judgments; and after all, what else is the confession of his own guilt but a true judgment passed by the penitent upon himself?

In the same unfair spirit Rev. A. Tagliatela speaks of Catholic intolerance; and it is interesting to notice that his words provoked some unfavorable comments from other contributors to *Bilychnis* (Issues of August and September, 1917), especially that of Qui Quondam, who remarked that he misinterpreted a passage from Newman.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> While he does not deny that there are muddy waters even in Protestantism, he finds a radical difference in the fact that, after all, the Protestant churches possess the *true* Christ, whilst the Christ of the Catholics is but "an anæmic, spineless, byzantine Jesus," who inspires "a subtle sense of fear" (p. 305). Apart from the strange figure of a *spineless* Christ, who yet is capable of inspiring fear, it would not be unfair to ask Mr. Tagliatela of which Protestant Christ he speaks—of the Christ of the orthodox Protestant theology, or of the Jesus of the liberal theology? And which one of them is truly the Jesus of "the four evangelical biographies," to which he makes appeal? The charge of worshipping a boneless Christ was usually brought by Catholic polemicists of yore against Protestantism, especially on account of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. How comes it now to be turned against the Catholics themselves?

Such being the content of the book, we wonder why the editor did not think a fitter title for it would be "*The Churches and the Old Times*," instead of "*The Church and the New Times*." It is neither a Protestant nor a Modernist book, and it is not a consistent attempt at a constructive religious thought independent of both. It is essentially a polemical book. That is why it is a failure. That is why all the good that is in it will pass unnoticed and remain sterile. What the religious spirit of the new Italy needs now is wholly different and very far from the traditional style and language of the old anti-Catholic pamphlets. In this historical moment much more efficient would be the voice of a mystic speaking the simple language of love, than all the religious-philosophical precisions couched in a semi-Hegelian and semi-Kantian language, which is everything but clear and anything but Italian.

GIORGIO F. LA PIANA.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

INDIA AND ITS FAITHS. A Traveller's Record. JAMES BISSETT PRATT.  
The Houghton Mifflin Co. 1915. Pp. xi, 483. \$4.00.

India was the objective of the first deliberate outward movement from Europe after the Crusades, albeit the immediate result in the year 1492 was the discovery of America. Again, the first deliberately outreaching movement from the new world of the West was directed, past Europe, toward the same alluring land of the East. This time the motive was not geographical discovery nor political domination nor commercial trade, but a friendly religious interest. It was the foreign missionary movement, which was begun by a group of Williams College students in 1806 (only seventeen years after the adoption of the national Constitution). The first missionaries who went from the United States went to India, and landed in Calcutta. Driven away by the East India Co., they went elsewhere in India. Following that lead, American missionaries have spread into all the non-Christian countries, so that now they are more than twice as numerous as the representatives of the United States in the listed Diplomatic and Consular Service.

During the century which has elapsed since the first connection with India, the United States has acquired absolutely no political connection and relatively slight commercial connection with that distant country. But the religious interest has not diminished. The most scholarly book in any language on the subject of "*The Religions of India*" is by an American Professor of Sanskrit (E. W.

Hopkins of Yale University). The first (and till now, the only) scholarly volume dealing with "Modern Religious Movements in India" is the course of lectures (delivered by J. N. Farquhar) in the Hartford Theological Seminary.

Now comes another notable volume from that same New England hill-top college from whence came the very first Americans with an active outlook which reached to the religious life of aliens on the other side of the globe. It maintains the same high standards of scholarliness and of human interest; indeed, in no other single volume has there been accomplished so successfully a combination of the two view-points of the afore-mentioned books, namely, a historical survey of the religions of India, and a first-hand report of their recent developments.

Ten years ago Professor Pratt in his volume, *The Psychology of Religious Belief*, gave a clear and well-informed, though brief, interpretation of "Religious Belief in India" in the chapter under that title. Now, when this American Professor of philosophy during a year's leave of absence seeks the most interesting and profitable opportunity for further study and light in solving the profound problems of the psychology and philosophy of religion in which (as he explains in the Preface) he is especially interested, he betakes himself, not to solitude nor to huge libraries nor to scholars more learned in his specialty, but rather to living intercourse in the land of India, motherland of a larger number of organized living religions than have been produced in any other country in the world.

Besides Christianity (which has become the third largest religious group in India) the book deals with six other distinct religions, four of them indigenous and two imported. The largest amount of attention is appropriately devoted to the peculiar immemorial religion of India. Hinduism holds within its capacious, yet strictly nationalistic, embrace both polytheists and pantheists, both atheists and theists, both idolaters and spiritualists, and almost every kind of religious belief that has ever appeared in the history of religion. Even Christ is tolerantly offered an honorable place in the Hindu pantheon as one of the many incarnations of Vishnu, provided only that his followers will live peaceably with Hindus by observing the conventional rules of the caste system; that is the only point where there is any intolerance in Hinduism. In the decade reported in the last government census it grew at the rate of a million a year (i.e., 5.6 per cent), mounting to the vast total of 217,000,000; yet it did not increase as fast as the natural increase of the population of India as a whole (which was 7.1 per cent). Both theoretically



and actually membership in this religion has been reserved for the children of Hindu parents; and throughout its long history it has accepted only two individual non-Hindu proselytes, namely, Mrs. Annie Besant of theosophic fame, and an enthusiastic American convert, Miss Margaret E. Noble, who assumed the (quasi-Hindu) name "Sister Nivedita." Yet Hinduism has recently been conceived of, and presented, in an entirely new manner. Remarkably international is the latest advocacy of Hinduism, prompted by the agonies of the present war as the only way "to avert all wars in the future"—Harendranath Maitra's *Hinduism, the World-Ideal* (1916, with an Introduction by G. K. Chesterton). And—not merely as an academic proposition, but actually—on the occasion of the full moon at the beginning of July, 1917, there was organized in Bombay The Hindu Missionary Society with an Apostles' Union. Wonderful indeed is the adaptive vitality of this the oldest living religion in the world today! The volume under review displays no little analytic and organizing skill in interpreting the profundities and the contradictory features of Hinduism. Thus the monism of philosophic Hinduism is well reported in the chapter on "The One God," and the polytheism of popular Hinduism in the chapter on "The Many Gods."

Especially valuable and all but unique (except for Farquhar's book) is the report, at once comprehensive, detailed, and sympathetically interpretative, of the various educational and reform movements as well as of the more distinctly religious sects. Chapters either in whole or in part are devoted to the Brahmo Samaj (a definitely theistic sect), the Arya Samaj (a politically interested, reactionary Hinduism), the Radhasoamis (who are interested in a curious combination of mystical quietism with a certain pseudo-scientific theory of vibration), the Kabir Panth (a monotheistic, anti-caste movement), and Theosophy (that nondescript occultism with an educational programme, avowedly learned yet almost hopelessly obscurantist).

Besides Hinduism with its heterogeneous varieties there are treated the five other separate non-Christian religions in India, namely, Muhammadanism (the second largest), Sikhism (offshoot and combination of the previous two), Jainism, and Buddhism (both of which originally were theoretically atheistic and practically reforming movements within Hinduism, but which subsequently have become independent and even quasi-theistic through the deification of their respective founders), and Zoroastrianism (which has the honor of being the very first religion in the world to aim at universalism and

actually to overpass national boundaries, but which now is as narrowly hereditary as any religion in the world).

With all of these the author has dealt in a notably successful manner, according to his plan of a historical and doctrinal as well as a contemporary and personal report. The book is manifestly the report of a traveller, alert and friendly, who has secured a far more intelligent and favorable acquaintance with India than has the average traveller. However, the sub-title is hardly adequate, inasmuch as the book is more manifestly the report of a diligent professional student and an enthusiastically admiring friend.

The book aims to be, and is indeed, judicial. The single serious criticism which might be passed upon it is that some of its estimates are over-charitable. If the author had had the opportunity for more intensive and extensive acquaintance with the life of the people of India along with the fine individuals whom he enterprisingly met during his few months in the land (whom he can truly, and should properly, report), he would probably be not less appreciative and hopeful, yet more judicious in some of his generalizations. For example, he considers (p. 288) that Jainism is "a very respectable system, and ranks well among the religions of India"; whereas another not less trustworthy student and friend of India (Professor Hopkins in his *Religions of India*, p. 297) concludes his account of Jainism with a very different estimate: "A religion in which the chief points insisted upon are that one should deny God, worship man, and nourish vermin, has indeed no right to exist, nor has it had as a system much influence upon the history of thought." And it was manifestly in a mood of rapture (such as that in which was indited the beautifully tender reminiscent last sentence of the Preface) that the author, in describing a weed-choked, all but disused temple containing an idol of Buddha, proceeded to interpret "the wild growth of fern up to his feet as though Nature too were eager to pay its reverence to him who was the Light of Asia." Here is clearly a case of a Professor in love with his subject.

However, the very fact of such extreme sympathy renders the more noteworthy and incisive the final conclusion which the author reaches. The elaborate exposition of systems and sub-systems culminates in the twentieth chapter (on "Christian Missions in India," which is perhaps the most worthful single chapter in the book) with this momentous judgment (p. 462): "Christianity has a message which the non-Christian world cannot do without. And the delivery of that message is the greatest debt which the West owes the East." Near the end of the closing chapter of the book



(which proposes and answers the question "What the West Might Learn") there is again expressed the same clear comparison and conviction (p. 475): "Doubtless the East has more to learn from us than we from the East. And certainly the best that it has to give we might have gained from our own Great Teacher, if we only would."

Thus while the book is not primarily missionary in its purport, it contains the most powerful missionary apologetic. It is a book which henceforth will be indispensable for the missionary to India as well as to the intelligent traveller and the general student of India and religion, for which classes it was chiefly intended. This learned and vivacious report of a keen observer, a careful student, and a warm friend will bring vividly again to the attention of the West a national situation than which there has been none more fascinating, accessible, elusive, rewarding, perilous, and magnificent in the history of India.

ROBERT E. HUME.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

THE ENGLISH HYMN: ITS DEVELOPMENT AND USE IN WORSHIP. LOUIS F. BENSON. George H. Doran Co. 1915. Pp. 624. \$3.50.

The author of this book is well known to students of hymnody as the accomplished editor of the revised Presbyterian Hymnal of 1911, and as lecturer on Liturgics at Princeton Theological Seminary. Few men, either in England or America, are so well equipped to write a historical treatise on English hymnody as is Dr. Benson, and few have access to so extensive a collection of sources as he has built up for himself in his own collection of hymn-books. The volume which is here reviewed is by all odds the best available reference book covering the whole development of English hymnody, from the rise of psalmody about the middle of the sixteenth down to the opening years of the twentieth century. It does, indeed, stand quite by itself in its research into the sources of hymns, in its detailed outline of the historical development of the many branches of English hymnody, and in its breadth of treatment. Other studies covering the whole field have been far less thorough; or, if full and detailed, like the Introduction to the *Historical Edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern*, have been limited to a much narrower outlook. Dr. Benson has sought to cover the entire range of English hymnody, including within his view the hymns of such bodies as the Church of Latter Day Saints, as well as the outpourings of more conventional

religious organizations in both England and America. He has estimated their value with fair and unbiased discrimination.

The scholarly study of hymnology is a very recent development in the English-speaking world. German scholars did good work during the first half of the nineteenth century in the fields of German and Latin hymnody; but David Sedgwick, a second-hand bookseller in London who died in 1879 at the age of sixty-three, was apparently the first Englishman to collect hymn-books, and as late as 1850 or 1860 the careless ignorance of even those who undertook to edit hymnals was amazing. Students of hymnody have failed to realize until recently that out of old psalm- and hymn-books, dry and unattractive though they seem, the dominant religious ideals of the past can often best be reconstructed, and that in them, in church proceedings, and in the memoirs of hymn-writers, the development of the general tendencies of a nation's hymnody can alone be at all accurately traced. Dr. Benson has built his book out of these primary sources, and therefore speaks with a voice of authority much more commanding than that of most other writers on hymnody. The method is, indeed, the only sound basis for a scholarly reference-book such as this, but it must be said that it involves the sacrifice of some part of the human interest with which a good writer can invest the study of outstanding individual writers or groups of writers. The serious student will, however, be duly grateful for a volume which consists, not of guesses and gossip about hymns and their writers, but of trustworthy, first-hand information, skilfully used in tracing the development of English hymnody.

It is somewhat strange that we should have had to wait so long for such a work as this, for the English hymn has long offered an attractive field for research. Dr. Benson's comprehensive book, so far from exhausting the field, serves rather to suggest still further opportunities for investigation. Until very recent years there has been a tendency to slight both the literary value and the religious significance of psalmody and hymnody. The average hymnal has been compared with such collections as *The Golden Treasury*, greatly to the former's disadvantage. The critics have overlooked the fact that the basis of comparison was unsound. A hymnal is not a collection of poems to be read, but of songs to be sung by a company of people, and should be compared with collections of ballads, or of popular songs. Ballads have long been considered worthy of collection and study by scholars, but the psalms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries — commonly modelled on the ballad meters — and the succeeding hymnody of the seventeenth



and eighteenth centuries, offer quite as rewarding a field of study. Hymnody is, in truth, a fruitful and engaging by-path of English literature, for if few hymns take high rank as poetry, a great many hymns do enrich and adorn the body of minor English verse. Indeed, it may safely be said that the English-speaking world could better dispense with all its other minor poets than with its hymn-writers.

The continued production of noble hymns by a church or a people is one of the surest signs of religious vitality. It indicates a fresh and living spirit which is outpouring itself in worship. That fact should give us good ground for hope in a renewal of the influence of religion in the English-speaking world. Dr. Benson, who carries his report down to 1914, points out some of the writers who have produced vigorous hymns in the last decade or two, hymns in which depth of thought and warmth of expression are combined with a far higher degree of literary skill and poetic instinct than was commonly the case in earlier days. He notes also the striking phenomenon of the great production of new hymn-books since 1900, both in England and America. Practically every denomination has revised, or is revising, its collection, and the new books almost uniformly mark a vast improvement over the old, in the quality and character of the hymns included and in catholicity of spirit. This phenomenon is, of course, simply the response of the churches to the spirit of the new day; their recognition that perhaps the truest expression of a people's deepest faith is to be found in the hymns they sing. It is a wholesome sign of spiritual growth when people find that the hymns of the fathers no longer fully express their own religious aspirations, and that they are moved to "sing unto the Lord a new song." *The English Hymn* will illuminate the path of the student and lover of hymns, and will make more easy the task of editors of future hymn-books. It has a carefully detailed table of contents and an ample index. There are a few misprints in the latter part of the book.

HENRY WILDER FOOTE.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.